A HANDBOOK

OF

EGYPTIAN RELIGION


مصر في عيون المرشد السياحي
مكتبة المرشد السياحي الضخمة

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

THE volume here translated appeared originally in 1904 as one of the excellent series of handbooks which, in addition to descriptive catalogues, are provided by the Berlin Museums for the guidance of visitors to their great collections. The handbook of the Egyptian Religion seemed especially worthy of a wide circulation. It is a survey by the founder of the modern school of Egyptology in Germany, of perhaps the most interesting of all the departments of this subject. The Egyptian religion appeals to some because of its endless variety of form, and the many phases of superstition and belief that it represents; to others because of its early recognition of a high moral principle, its elaborate conceptions of a life after death, and its connection with the development of Christianity; to others again no doubt because it explains pretty things dear to the collector of antiquities, and familiar objects in museums.

Professor Erman is the first to present the Egyptian religion in historical perspective; and it is surely a merit in his work that out of his profound knowledge of the Egyptian texts, he permits them to tell their own tale almost in their own words, either by extracts or by summaries. His pages are particularly free from theory, and no theory is needed to engage our attention when the facts and views disclosed are so attractive.

The author has written a special preface for the English edition, and has modified one or two points in his text as regards the degree in which burnt sacrifice was customary. A few of the illustrations that were in the original have been omitted, and their places taken by others. Mr. Hilton Price has especially to be thanked for his generosity in lending blocks employed in the catalogue of his collection.

F. LL. GRIFFITH.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book has no pretensions to erudition, neither is it one that will afford a systematic representation of its subject; still less is it exhaustive. My endeavour has been to exhibit to a wide circle of readers the development and decay of a great religion through more than three thousand years, and for this task I had only a limited space at my disposal. Any discussion of disputed points was thus out of the question, and I had also to withstand the temptation to linger over points of special interest. The most important phenomena could only be sketched in outline, and where I have cited details in order to render the picture more intelligible, I have been forced to choose almost at random from the abundant material which lay ready to my hand. Other writers undoubtedly would often have differed from me in their choice.

A greater difficulty lay in the immature condition of these studies. Of the religions of the ancient world there is perhaps no other for which we possess such an amount of material, so endless and impossible to grasp, as we do for this. It is in fact too great, and in addition to this our comprehension of the ancient religious writings is still very incomplete. All the insight and labour devoted by Brugsch, Budge, Lange, Lefébure, Lepage Renouf, Lepsius, Maspero, Moret, Naville, Turaieff, Wiedemann, and many others, to the investigation of Egyptian religion, or to its description, have hitherto resulted in little more than the preliminary orientation of this intricate domain, and it will require many more decades of hard work before we shall be able to obtain a clear view. At the present time, therefore, any one who wishes to construct a picture of Egyptian

religion must make the sketch complete all round, and in so doing must call imagination to his aid more frequently than is desirable. I must therefore ask that too much importance may not be attached to this book; I have represented the Egyptian religion as it appears to me after thirty years' study of its monuments, but I am aware that I am not in a position to insist strongly on every feature of the picture.

And one more remark. I considered it advisable to present this sketch of Egyptian Religion as it appears to an unprejudiced observer, who knows nothing of the theories of the modern science of religions; the reader will here find nothing of animism, or fetishism, of chthonic deities, nor yet of medicine men. The facts should first be established and without prejudice, before we attempt to fit them into a scientific system.

The illustrations to the German edition were drawn by Herr Alfred Bollacher, under the guidance of Professor Schäfer.

ADOLF ERMAN.

Steglitz, April 1904.

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PRELIMINARY NOTE

It is well known that our knowledge of Egyptian history is very incomplete. We will here indicate the meaning of the divisions which have been adopted in order to supply the lack of an accurate chronology. The history of Egypt is divided thus—

1. The Prehistoric Period.
2. The Earliest Period, from the founding of the united kingdom of Egypt (about 3300 B.C.). This is divided into three dynasties.
3. The Old Kingdom.—The first great period in Egypt (about 2800–2300 B.C.), comprising Dynasties IV., V. and VI.
4. An intermediate period of which little is known.
5. The Middle Kingdom. Dynasties XI.–XIII., including the great period of the twelfth dynasty (*circa* 2000–1800 B.C.).
6. The so-called Hyksos Period, of which little is known.
7. The New Kingdom, comprising Dynasty XVIII. (1580–1320 B.C.), the great epoch of Egyptian power, and Dynasties XIX., XX. (1320–1100 B.C.).
8. The so-called Libyan Period, an intermediate time of which little is known.
9. The Saitic Period, comprising Dynasty XXVI., the time of the Saite kings (663–525 B.C.), and the time of the Persian domination (525–332 B.C.).
10. The "Hellenic Period" in Egypt, comprising the time of Alexander; the Ptolemaic kings (332–30 B.C.); and the Roman domination (from 30 B.C.).

INTRODUCTION

FROM time immemorial, the narrow valley of the Lower Nile was inhabited by a people of African race, who pastured their cattle on the marshes of the Delta, and grew their corn in the cultivated land of the upper country, and in consequence of these peaceful pursuits attained earlier than other nations to an advanced stage of civilization. When, at some later period, the needy Bedouins of the Arabian peninsula seized the country—an event which has been repeated in less remote times—the Egyptians adopted their language, but not their civilization, and a people of mixed nationality was formed who abandoned none of their earlier customs. To this we have a parallel to-day in modern Egypt, where invading Bedouins, the Arabs of Islam, have once more imposed their own language on the people, while yet these Arabic-speaking Egyptians have in no way changed their mode of life from that of their Christian and pagan forefathers. For the nature of that marvellous country is stronger than any human power.

There is, however, one point in which the modern Arabs appear to have imposed their influence far more successfully than the Bedouin of ancient times. They have succeeded in giving the Egyptians a new religion, as well as a new language, whereas there are no indications of a similar result of the ancient invasion. In the beliefs and conceptions of the ancient Egyptians as we find them in the earliest literature there is nothing that relates in any way to the characteristics of the desert, or to the conditions of life there, while there is very much that can only be explained by the peculiar conditions of Egypt. The religion of Egypt must therefore be considered to be a product of Egypt, whence in large measure it acquired

its special character. Egypt is an agricultural country, that notwithstanding its productiveness demands hard work, and trains its inhabitants to practical life. Their beliefs are thus distinguished by a certain sober earnestness; on this heavy soil a lively fancy will not flourish, but all manner of superstitions spring up readily. The world inhabited by these people was a limited one, they knew only their long, narrow valley, where each year their marvellous river deposited its wealth over the country; beyond there was only the desert, with which mankind had no concern. One thing, however, served to raise the mind of the Egyptian to something above himself, as for us to-day it invests the Nile valley with magic: the sky, with the glory of its sun and the indescribable splendour of its stars. In these stars the Egyptian recognized his gods, and for him no god could rank higher than the sun, which maintains all things and which calls all things into being. Among the objects most familiar to the Egyptian on earth were the animals and birds; as an agriculturist he would daily be brought into close contact with them, and under their forms accordingly he frequently represented his gods.

The peculiar character of the country influenced its religion in another way: it divided it. Lower Egypt is cut up in all directions by arms of the river, marshes and watercourses; while Upper Egypt, the most important part of the country, is a uniform narrow river valley where three to four million inhabitants live on a strip of land which may be compared to that which stretches from Bâle to the sea. In a country of this description, where the two divisions are so distinct and have but little mutual intercourse, there must necessarily have sprung up in the separate provinces differences in speech, in ideas and in religion.

Thus in each larger town of Egypt and in the country surrounding it, religion assumed a special form. The principal gods are called by different names in the different provinces. They have different legends and distinctive forms of worship; besides this there is here and there a town with a special god of its own, not recognized elsewhere. So long as Egypt was divided politically, these religious differences intensified

from century to century; but when she was united into one kingdom a peculiar process commenced. The religion of the town that was the royal residence became the official state religion; the temple was visited from all parts of the country, and its god recognized by all. Before long the wish would arise in other cities to worship a god of such distinction. His worship would then be introduced, or it would be discovered that the special god of the locality was in reality the same, and the two would be blended into one. When, with the progress of culture among the Egyptian nation, a uniform intellectual life developed in art, in literature, in science, we might expect to find that it led to a uniform and simplified religion. But this was never attained to. Neither the stress of political circumstances, nor the advancing education of the people, nor the increasing intercourse with other nations, ever brought this about. When the people of Bubastis learnt to worship the god Amon, because he was the deity of the royal city, they did not in the slightest degree abate their reverence for their goddess Bast, and when they began to realize that this ancient goddess is identical with Sekhmet and Isis, they did not on this account alter a fraction of their traditional conception of her, but simply added the new to the old.

A strange curse lay on the Egyptians: they could not forget. At the earliest period writing had been discovered by them and had placed them in the front rank of the nations, but the price of this remained to be paid. Every fresh epoch of their long existence brought them new ideas, but the earlier ideas did not disappear in consequence. It is possible that the latter might fall into temporary neglect, but they were still treasured as sacred possessions, and in another century would once more assume a prominent position. Or again, a book that lay dormant in some temple library would one day become a living influence. In this way the confusion of ideas, national and local, old and new, increased with every successive period, and added to the mass of religious details that rejoiced the Egyptian theologians, but which we regard with horror.

Yet it will well repay us to follow the beliefs of the Egyptians through the centuries, even if the points we attempt to observe

are precisely those which the Egyptian priest would have held in contempt. To notice how the Egyptian in the primitive period believed that he could see his gods still living a natural life; how later, when his gods, living in their colossal temples, had become strangers to him, he invented for himself certain helpers whom he could treat with greater intimacy; how at one time a ruler of the country bravely attempted to free himself and his people from the yoke of the ancient faith; how among all the extravagant ideas concerning life after death, the feeling yet obtained that the righteousness of man would then be far more powerful than forms and ceremonies—to see these things appears to us of much greater importance than to know all the names, symbols, and feast days of the gods and goddesses.

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CHAPTER I

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE EARLY PERIOD

WHEN the subject of Egyptian religion is mentioned, our thoughts turn instinctively to the beliefs held at the period during which was achieved the building of the temples of Karnak and Luxor, of Medinet Habu, and Abu Simbel, palaces where the gods sat enthroned, and where their magnificent festivals were celebrated. But this period, so well known to us, is separated by a vast interval from the time when the Egyptian religion first acquired its external forms. An examination of these external forms will show how faithfully the representations of the gods were adhered to, and how modest and simple must have been the conditions of the nation that first created them.

The people had already learnt to carve rough figures of gods either in human or animal form, and these they chose to distinguish by a variety of crowns, but as yet their imagination did not go beyond diadems formed either of handfuls of reeds, the horns of sheep or cows, or of ostrich feathers. For a sceptre, their gods carried a staff such as every Bedouin cuts for himself at the present day, and their goddesses were contented with a simple

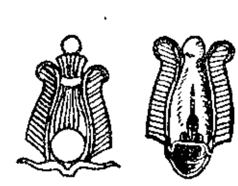


FIG. 1. CROWNS.

reed. Their temples were mere huts with walls of plaited wicker work, the front of the roof was adorned with projecting wooden beams. A few short posts and two high masts in front of the building were added to provide further decoration. The altar consisted of a reed mat, and for the celebration of festivals, simple bowers were erected.

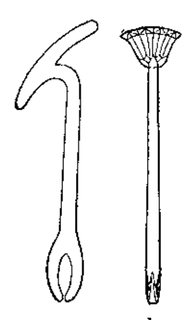


FIG. 2. SCEPTRES.
a. Gods'. b. Goddesses'.

Where the outward forms were so primitive we must expect to find the religious conceptions even more primitive, and all that is known to us of the ancient modes of thought confirms this expectation.

Those to whom the following explanation of Egyptian ideas may seem far too simple, should remember that for the most part they were conceived by a race of naked, half savage peasants. These ideas were inherited by the Egyptians of historical times, the subjects of Cheops, Amenemhat and Ramses, who preserved them for us. In order to understand them it is necessary to transport ourselves to that far-distant infancy of the Egyptian nation, when the inhabitant of the Nile Valley gazed with awe on the ever-moving bodies in the heavens above him, and in those marvellous phenomena recognized the gods who ruled the world.

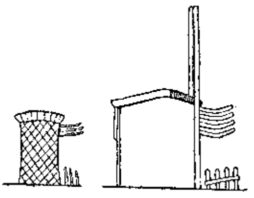


FIG. 3. PRIMITIVE TEMPLES.

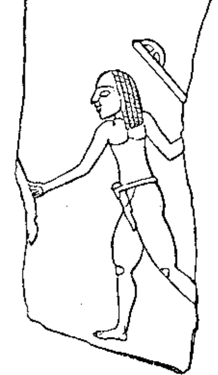


FIG. 4. WARRIOR OF THE PRIMITIVE PERIOD.
(Berlin, 15084.)

Numerous are the ideas concerning the universe, and the representations by which the people attempted to express their ideas. In one of these the sky appears as an immense cow whose feet are resting on the earth. In another the sky is a woman, who supports herself with hands and feet on the earth. But the most usual representation, at least in later times, is one where the sky is

a sheet of water, on which the stars sail in boats; or again it rests on the so-called *four pillars of heaven,* fabulous mountains, situated at the four corners of the earth. While the sky is usually regarded as being feminine, a woman, and a cow, the earth figures as a man on whose back it is that vegetation grows. Apparently the grammatical gender of the two words—*pet,* "sky," is feminine, *to,* "earth," is masculine—led to this conception.



Fig. 5. Mother and child of the primitive period. (Berlin, 14441.)

We also meet with a multiplicity of ideas regarding the sun. In the morning it is born, either as a calf of the celestial cow, or as a child of the goddess of the sky; in the evening it is an old man who goes down to the dead. It is the right eye of a great god whose left eye is the moon, and who flies across the heavens like a hawk. Or again a beetle, the great dung-beetle of Egypt rolls the sun before it, as its earthly brother is seen rolling the ball in which it lays its egg. Or, and this is the most brilliant idea, the sun, moon and stars sail in ships over the heavenly ocean. This, however, raises the question how it is possible for the sun which disappears every evening in the West to reappear in the morning in the East; a question usually solved by the Egyptians by imagining a second heaven under the earth, which the sun traverses by night. It is a dark place, inhabited by the dead, lighted at night by the sun when he sails through it in his bark. For even this underworld possesses a river, a mysterious stream which also ascends into the world of the living. At the southern border of Egypt, near the island of Elephantine, it rises in two whirlpools and flows through Egypt as the river Nile.

From this we see that in the eyes of the primitive Egyptian even the Nile did not flow outside Egypt. The cataract formed the extreme boundary of his world. Out of all these incongruous elements the Egyptian of historical times set himself to compose his picture of the universe, and mixed them haphazard without permitting himself to be disturbed by the incredible nonsense which ensued. The sky was pictured as a

cow; and ships sailed along her belly. It was spoken of as an ocean; and as giving birth to the sun. The sun god was

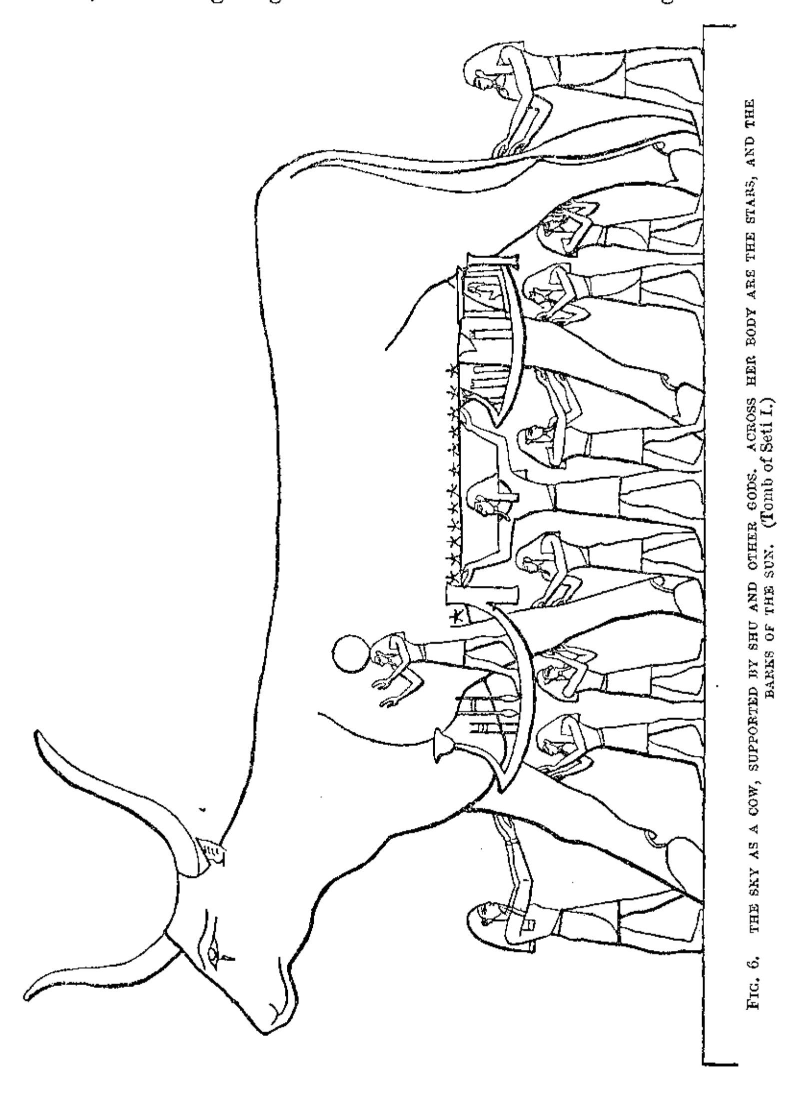


FIG. 6. THE SKY AS A COW, SUPPORTED BY SHU AND OTHER GODS. ACROSS HER BODY ARE THE STARS, AND THE BARKS OF THE SUN. (Tomb of Seti I.)

spoken of as a beetle; and the sun was described as his eye. And thus it is with names and forms, which, originally separate

conceptions, become confused. For instance, in immediate sequence and in one sentence the sun god is spoken of as Re, Khepre, Horus, Harakhti, Atum, etc. Also in the case of descriptions of the individual gods, which we are now about to consider, we shall repeatedly be forced to accept this complexity of ideas, as only too often we do not possess the information that would enable us to disentangle them. There is yet another element in this medley, the constant confusion, half serious, half playful, between the gods and their sacred animals. Because in primitive Egypt the water god was regarded as a crocodile, and the moon god as an ibis, these gods were often regarded and represented in later times under these forms, but this did not preclude human forms being also attributed to them. As a rule a compromise was effected in representing them, and the gods were shown in human form with the heads of their respective animals.



FIG. 7. THE BARK OF THE SUN.

The Egyptian artist learnt in very early days to correct the unnatural nature of such a fusion by clever artistic treatment, so that in good representations of the gods we scarcely find ourselves disturbed by it.

To the Egyptians there was no god of higher standing than the sun god, who was regarded as the sole creator, and ruler of the world; from the bark in which he traversed the heavens, *the great god, the god of heaven* governed all things, and whosoever in daily life merely speaks of *the god*, he will think of him. All things exult when he arises, and even the apes pray unto him; men also raise their hands morning and evening, and laud him thus: *Glory to thee, thou who risest in the horizon. . . . "Praise to thee" say the assembled gods, "thou beautiful beloved child." When he arises mankind lives, and the people exult on his account. The gods of Heliopolis shout to him, and the gods of both the great cities extol him. The baboons laud him, "Praise to thee" say all the beasts together. Thy serpent overthrows thy foes.*

Thou exultest in thy barks, thy manhood is content . . . and thou rejoicest, lord of the gods, over that which thou hast created. They rejoice; the waters of heaven become blue in thy presence and at thy glance the ocean glistens.[1]

From earliest times this god had special localities devoted to his worship, but one of these rose to such fame as to overshadow the others. This was On, or—as following the Greek nomenclature it is generally called—Heliopolis, the primeval city, situated not far from modern Cairo at Matariyeh. We believe it is evident that the Egyptian religion was greatly influenced at the earliest period by Heliopolis, and up to the latest times the priests of On were credited with the possession of great wisdom.

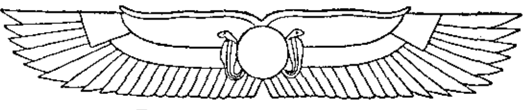


FIG. 8. THE SUN GOD OF EDFU.

Another important centre of the worship of the sun god, was Edfu in Upper Egypt, where even now his temple stands complete. Here originated the remarkable figure of the god which represents him as the sun with multicoloured wings as he flies across the heavens triumphant over his enemies. This figure of *Horus of Edfu* (or, as he was usually styled, *he of Edfu*) is placed over the gateways of the temples to keep out all evil things.

Numerous were the names of the sun god. The most general one, RE, denoted the sun itself. HORUS or HAR-AKHTE originally stood for the god, regarded as a bird of prey with blazing eyes, while KHEPRE denoted the god in form of a beetle. Finally the evening sun was represented by ATUM in the form of an old man. The sun god is usually represented with the head of a sparrow-hawk surmounted by the sun; this is encircled with its terrible servant, the fire-spitting serpent, who destroys his enemies. For there is no lack of enemies to oppose the progress of the sun, and one of these, Apophis, the cloud and

[1] *Book of the Dead.* Totb. ed. Naville, 15 A.

storm serpent, is the embodiment of all that is terrible. But they cannot obstruct the progress of the god, he accomplishes in triumph his journey across the heavens, and in the evening arrives at the mountains of the West, where he is received by the goddess of the West. Here he quits his *morning bark* in which he travels by day, and enters the *evening bark* to begin his nightly journey through the under-world. *There he shines forth for the great god Osiris, the eternal Lord.* The dead, however, *the inhabitants of the caverns, greet him joyfully; they lift up their arms and praise him, they declare unto him their wishes. . . . Their eyes open once more at the sight of him, and their heart is filled with joy when they see him. He hears the prayers of those who lie in the coffins, he cures their pains and drives away their sorrows. He restores breath to their nostrils.*

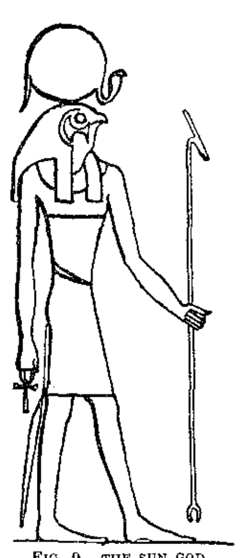


FIG. 9. THE SUN GOD.

As the winds of the upper-world can find no entrance to this Hades, the dead fasten a cord to the fore part of the ship and drag it on earth, as boats are towed on the Nile when the wind is unfavourable.[1]

The part assigned by the Egyptians to the moon god, the *representative of Re* by night, is far less important. He is the ibis-headed god THOTH, *the bull among the stars, the moon in heaven,* as he is called in an inscription in the Berlin collection.[2] At the same time, he is the *scribe of the gods, and the judge in heaven,* who gave *speech and writing,* and by his arithmetic enabled gods and men to keep account of their possessions. He is the god of all wisdom and learning, and he discovered the *divine words,* i. e. written characters. It is easy to see how it was

[1] Totb. ed. Naville, 15 B. 11. For the further development of this idea, see Chapter IV.

[2] Berlin, 2293.

that the moon god assumed this character, for he regulated time and therefore would be the representative of all reckonings and notes of events. The principal centre of his worship was at Eshmunen in Middle Egypt, the town which was called Hermopolis in Greek times. Under another name, KHONSU, *he who travels across* the heavens, the moon was worshipped at Thebes in purely human form as a child, although this god appears to have been little known in early times outside his own abode. It is only in the New Kingdom that for a time we find representations of him appearing prominently elsewhere.

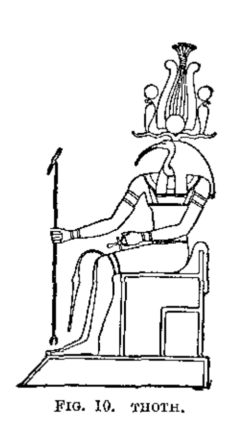


FIG. 10. THOTH.

We also meet with the goddess of the sky under various names, which prove their development from differing conceptions of her. As NUT, she retained her character as the female representative of the sky, and wife of the earth god KEB. This very small share is all she was accorded in the actual religion of Egypt, and in historical times she received scarcely any veneration. Under another name, however, she was extremely popular as HATHOR. Although this name, *House of Horus*, abode of the sun god, directly and unequivocally designates her as the sky, yet an almost complete change in her rôle occurred early. As by her position as goddess of the heavens she was the chief of the goddesses, she was also the divine representative of women, who worshipped her before all others, and thus she became the brilliant goddess of pleasure and of love. Other aspects must have grown out of her characteristic of sky goddess, but to us they remain incomprehensible. She is called *the eye of Re*, and she appears as the goddess of the West; as such she stands on the mountain of the West and receives the setting sun and the dead. It is needless to remark that the goddess of women would necessarily have innumerable sanctuaries. One of the principal of these was Denderah in Upper Egypt, where her temple still delights us with its beauty.

The cow form of the goddess of heaven, to which we have

already referred, appears originally to have been assigned exclusively to Hathor, but it is possible that its application to this goddess was not popular, and also that when merely the head of the cow was placed on her, it was not in agreement with her later characteristics. Therefore in very early times a remarkable head was contrived for her, human, yet at the same time animal, a broad kindly woman's face surrounded by thick plaits of hair, and retaining nothing of the cow except the ears, which preserve some trace of the animal in her aspect. Or else she has an ordinary woman's head, and a head-dress which recalls the ancient celestial cow, consisting of two horns between which appears the sun.



FIG. 11. HATHOR.
From a capital at Bubastis.



FIG. 12. NEITH.

We also find the sky goddess in NEITH of Sais, *the mother who brought forth the sun, who began to bring forth even before being born.*[1] Like HATHOR, she is a goddess of women. It is probable that at one time she was the national goddess of Lower Egypt, as she wears the red crown of that country, and holds arrows in her hand as though she were of warlike character. There is another great goddess of the Delta to whom it is natural to assign a similar origin; BAST, or as the Greeks called her, Bubastis, is a counterpart of the joyous Hathor, delighting in dancing and music. She is cat-headed, and is usually represented with the sistrum of the dancing women in her hand and a basket on her arm. When these attributes are omitted it is difficult to distinguish between the cat's head of Bast and the lion's head of the goddess SEKHMET, *the mighty one.* On this fact the Egyptians founded a connection between the two. Even if the goddesses were as distinct as

[1] Vatican statue of Naophore (Brugsch, *Thes.*, 637).

their two animals, yet Sekhmet is a terrible goddess of war and strife, and the question arises whether both these divinities with



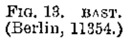


FIG. 13. BAST. (Berlin, 11354.)

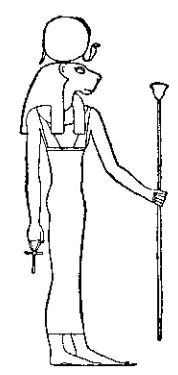


FIG. 14. SEKHMET.

colourless names, *She who is from Bast* and *The mighty one*, did not develop originally from such a sky goddess as we are already acquainted with in Nut, Hathor and Neith. For is not Hathor the kindly goddess of love? and yet in the legends, as we shall see, she appears as a dreadful goddess who slew the enemies of Re.

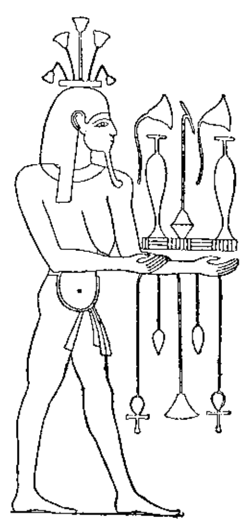
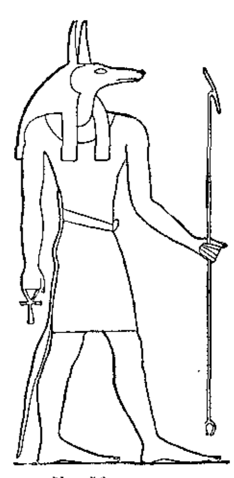


FIG. 15. THE NILE.

Another member of the group of heavenly deities is SHU, or as he is frequently called, Onuris, *supporter of the heavens*, who raises up and supports the sky. He is also represented as a column of air, and in him we may well see the god of the atmosphere which lies between heaven and earth (see Fig. 34).

From the great importance of the Nile for the land of Egypt we should expect to find this river among the principal gods of the country. But he has to content himself with being called *the father*

of the gods, and with receiving offerings at the time of the inundation, otherwise he plays no more important part in religion than the sky goddess Nut, or the earth god Keb. At times he is given a subservient part; on the sculptures he is represented in partly female form, in the costume of fishers and sailors, standing before the great gods and presenting them with gifts which his waters have produced.


FIG. 16. ANUBIS.

The dark world under the earth, to which the sun sinks in the west, and where also the dead belong who sleep in the earth, was more remote from mankind than were the heavens, and this may be the reason why representations of the lords of the under-world are yet more confused than those of the sky. Various localities possessed their own gods of the dead, and these had no relation to each other. The first of these were conceived of as jackals, such as the ancient god of the dead, ANUBIS, who later superintended the process of embalming, and the two gods WEPWAWET, the *guides*, a well-chosen name, as it was they who showed the dead the paths through their dark domain. It was perfectly natural that the jackal should be considered the animal of the god of the dead; in the desert where the dead were buried, these animals might be seen every evening, prowling about in the dusk. In the neighbourhood of Memphis a god with the head of a sparrow-hawk was worshipped, SOKARIS, another god of the dead, whose celebrated shrine Ro-Setau, *the gates of the ways*, led direct to the underworld. It is possible that part of this shrine has survived in the so-called temple of the Sphinx, the colossal building which at the


FIG. 17. WEPWAWET.
Hilton Price Collection.

present day excites the wonder of visitors to the pyramids of Gizeh.

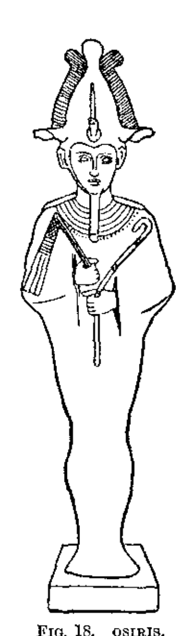


Fig. 18. OSIRIS.

But the glory of all these guardians of the dead was early thrown into the shade by the appearance of Osiris, although originally this god can hardly have been ruler of the underworld. He became so in consequence of the tradition (see p. 32 *et seq.*) which relates that he was put to death, and subsequently lived again as one of the dead. Two towns were more especially his sanctuaries, Dedu in the Delta, later named Busiris, and Abydos in Middle Egypt, where he was worshipped as *the first of those who are in the west*, e. g. king of the dead. He is usually represented in human form, as a mummy, with crown, sceptre and whip as symbols of his rank as a king. In Busiris, however, he was worshipped by the faithful under a strange figure, that of a pillar, of which the upper part is many times repeated. As the emblem of Osiris, this pillar became one of the most sacred symbols of the Egyptian religion, but what can it have been originally? Was it, as modern scholars have conjectured, some ancient wooden "fetish" of the dwellers in Busiris? or was it as Egyptian theologians wished to prove it, the backbone of the god, which was buried in that town? In any case it is worthy of note that there are other instances of such symbols as this of Osiris in the same locality. Both his wife Isis and his friend Anubis have emblems which are difficult to explain. Delight in such mystifications is one of the characteristic features of ancient Egypt.

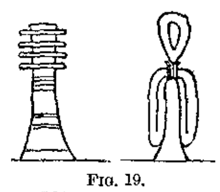


Fig. 19. SYMBOL OF OSIRIS. SYMBOL OF ISIS.

Fig. 20. SYMBOL OF ANUBIS.

It has not been difficult to trace the origin of most

of the gods we have mentioned so far. But there are many of whom this cannot be said, of whom some feature is comprehensible, but whose characteristics as a whole are entirely obscure to us. In the temple Hat-ke-ptah, where Memphis stood later, a god was worshipped from the earliest times; on the breast of his rude statue we can discern two hands holding a sceptre, while the head appears to be shaven and devoid of any ornament. This is Ptah, the divine sculptor, who gave and still gives form to all things and all beings on earth. He was regarded by artists and artisans as their patron.



FIG. 21. PTAH IN HIS CHAPEL.

In a similar character of creator and sculptor of certain beings we meet with another important god, either as a ram, or with a ram's head, KHNUM, worshipped in many localities. At one of his temples, that on the island of Elephantine, a new characteristic was attributed to him. Here in the midst of the foaming cataract, where it was believed that the waters gushed up from the underworld, he figured also as the cataract god, *lord of the cool waters*, a character which certainly was not his originally. It must have been far earlier that the god SOBK was worshipped as a water god. He is crocodile-headed as though water were his special element, and in no district was he more worshipped than in the Fayûm, that region of lake and marsh, where the land had laboriously to be redeemed from the water.

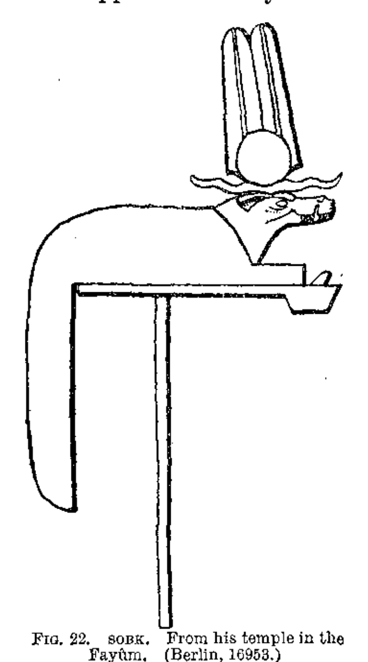


FIG. 22. SOBK. From his temple in the Fayûm. (Berlin, 16953.)

If it were owing to the position of his temple that the god of Elephantine developed into a

water god, it must have been on these same grounds that two other gods became gods of the East. In the land of Goshen, which stretches out from the Delta eastward into the desert, a god was worshipped, HAR-SOPD, who, as his name shows, was originally connected with the ancient sun god Horus, but who is only known to us as protector of the Eastern desert. Another lord of the East, the god MIN, was worshipped in that part of Upper Egypt where the Nile and the Red Sea approach each other most closely, and which was therefore at all periods the starting point of the caravan route to the Eastern world. Those who pursued this route, and who had therefore to brave the dangerous neighbourhood of the rapacious troglodytes, naturally committed themselves at Koptos to the protection of Min, the local god, before leaving the Nile Valley. Thus he became also a god of the Eastern desert, the *lord of foreign lands.* The archaic statues of Min, now at Oxford, found by Petrie in the foundations of the temple at Koptos, prove to us how ancient this conception was; even those rude sculptures of the earliest times have bivalve shell, elephants and mountains represented on the girdles, precisely the things to which the Koptos road led the way. Here again this attribute of Min is certainly not his original one. He is an ithyphallic figure, as if he were intended to beget the world, as according to a myth to be quoted later (see p. 26) the sun god is said to have done. As Min is frequently spoken of also as Horus, it may well be considered probable that Min is another name of the sun god. From another point of view also this figure is remarkable. On his head he wears two feathers, and the right fore-arm, with which he supports a



FIG. 23. MIN. (Berlin, 2439.)

scourge, is held upright. When, therefore, a few miles south of the home of Min, we meet with another god who wears similar lofty plumes, who is frequently represented as ithyphallic, and who also resembles Min in being of purely human form with dark complexion, it is natural to regard him as another form of Min. This god is no other than AMON of Thebes, king of the gods of later Egypt. In the early times with which we are now dealing, no one could have foreseen the importance that would one day accrue to him. He was the obscure god of a small town, and even his nearest neighbours, the people of Hermonthis, worshipped another god, the hawk-headed MONT. This Mont figures as the god of war. He conducts defeated enemies to Pharaoh or hands him the ancient sword of sickle form.



FIG. 24. AMON.

Egypt possessed yet another god of warlike tendencies, SET. Few gods are so famous as he is, and yet his origin is entirely unknown to us. Tradition has introduced him as well as Horus, the ancient sun god, into the Osiris myth, and has blurred and confused both presentments. Horus becomes the son, and Set the wicked brother of Osiris, who is defeated by Horus, but it is exactly in this apposition of the two gods, that we find an indication of an earlier character for Set, to which we possess other clues. When we find the two divisions of the country designated as *The two halves of Horus and Set*, and when according to an ancient title the ruler of these two divisions is styled *Horus and Set*, it appears that we have met with some of the numerous survivals of that far-distant time when Egypt was divided into two opposing kingdoms. Probably Set was then the protector of the kings of Upper Egypt and



FIG. 25. SET.
(Berlin, 13186.)

Horus of those of Lower Egypt. The animal by which Set is represented or whose head he wears, was considered in later times to be a donkey, although at least it could only have been a caricature of one. Probably it was intended for some animal with which the Egyptians of historical times were not familiar.

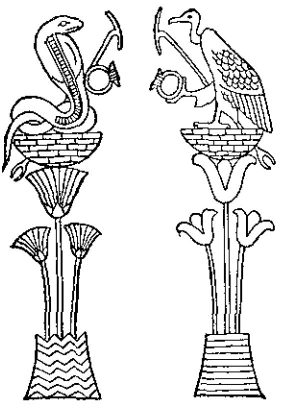


FIG. 26. BUTO AND NEKHBET.

As we find in Set and Horus the protectors of the two ancient divisions of Egypt, so also we know their protecting goddesses. In the ancient capital of the Upper Kingdom, the modern El Kab, flew NEKHBET in the form of a vulture, guarding the king. In Buto, the lower capital, dwelt UTO in the form of a serpent. In common with her city she is usually called Buto, following a Greek transposition.

In historical times, these two were combined as joint patronesses of the united kingdom, and we find occasional variants where both are represented as vultures, or both as

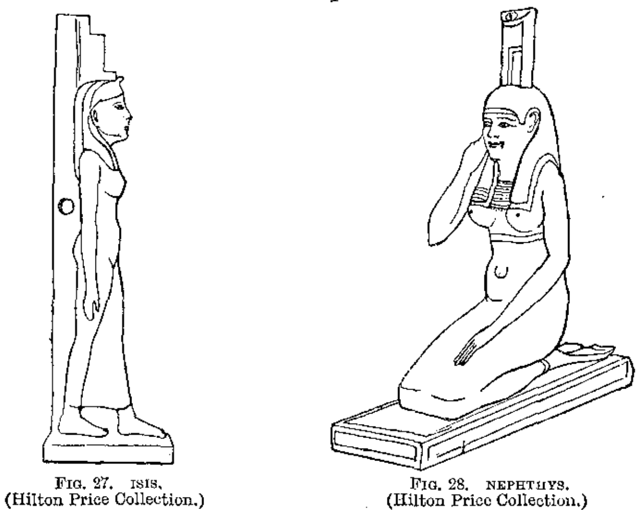


FIG. 27. ISIS. (Hilton Price Collection.)

FIG. 28. NEPHTHYS. (Hilton Price Collection.)

serpents. The goddess MUT of Thebes had also originally the

form of a vulture, and might therefore be interchangeable with the protecting goddess Nekhbet. Later, when she rose to great importance as the wife of Amon, she was represented as a woman wearing the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt which she had borrowed from the kings of her city.

We have no knowledge of the original nature of ISIS, the goddess who finally superseded almost all others, and appears before us as the sole goddess of Egypt. She has met with the same fate as her husband Osiris, her son Horus, her sister Nephthys and her brother Set; who lost all their original characteristics when they were interwoven in the Osiris myth. Although no goddess is so frequently mentioned as Isis, she appears before us only as the faithful wife of Osiris, and the devoted mother of Horus. She is merely an adjunct to her menfolk.



FIG. 29. MAAT. (Hilton Price Collection.)

Another goddess must be mentioned of whom we may safely affirm that she owes her existence to no phenomenon of nature. She is entirely a product of human invention and is thus a pure abstraction. This is MAAT, goddess of truth, whose priests were the supreme judges, and who was regarded as wife of the divine judge Thoth and daughter of the supreme god Re. As early as the Old Kingdom she ranked among the goddesses, nevertheless she is quite as much an artificial product as are the personifications of *beauty* or *wisdom* which we frequently find cited in poetry.

Many readers will consider that a very large number of the gods have already been mentioned, and yet these form but a small proportion of the deities venerated in Egypt. If a list could be made of all those worshipped at one time or another in the temples and shrines of the Nile Valley, they would probably amount to many hundreds of divinities. No doubt many of them are substantially identical even though they wear distinct crowns, and bear distinct names, but if these were all subtracted there would still remain a large number of beings of sacred character, who stand alone, and whose worship was confined to

one town only. They are the creations of simple minds, ready to believe that stones, trees, and animals may be the abode of spirits. The unknown power who thus manifests itself has gifts and prayers offered to it, owing to the awe which it inspires, and in course of time when the people of the town have long worshipped it in private, it finds a place in the temple and is added to the number of official divinities.

To the great group of such gods of inferior rank belong the sacred animals, of whom traces can be found in the temples as early as the Old Kingdom. We have already seen how the Egyptians of the earliest times frequently conceived of their gods in animal form. The sky as a cow, the sun as a sparrow-hawk, the moon as an ibis, the god of the dead as a jackal, the water god as a crocodile. These were symbols, necessary to mankind when they sought to express themselves metaphorically. We ourselves cannot avoid such figures of speech; we speak of the hand of God, and the mouth of God, and when we think of Him personally, we *instinctively think of Him in the form of an old* man. Where a divinity and an animal were associated with each other, there was naturally a desire to see that special animal in the temple of the god. In the temple of Sobk there was a tank containing a crocodile, a cat dwelt in the temple of Bast. Sparrow-hawks were kept in the sanctuary of the sun god, where they sat on perches and peacefully pecked their food out of bowls. There were other creatures kept in temples which were not representations of the god but stood in another definite relation to them. They belonged to them in much the same manner that the doves belonged to Aphrodite, or the owls to Athene. This is especially the case with some of the more widely known of these animals, the heron, Phœnix, and the bull Mnevis, who dwelt in the temple at Heliopolis, and the bull Apis, in the sanctuary of Ptah at Memphis. We cannot now trace why Apis attained to such honour. That Mnevis should be regarded as the animal of the sun god is not surprising, as that god was often addressed as a

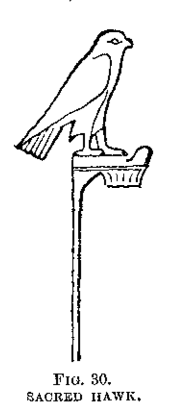


FIG. 30.
SACRED HAWK.

bull, to the Egyptians the essence of all strength and virility. With regard to the Phœnix which was *born in the pastures*[1] of the temple and which only occasionally allowed itself to be seen there, we are tempted to attribute its origin to a chance. Is it not possible that once in those earliest times some herons made their nest accidentally in this most sacred locality, and would not this nest form an object of veneration and curiosity for the simple-minded worshippers at the temple? For a long period they would see the nest occupied each successive year, then perhaps the birds would desert it; and great must have been the joy after many years when another Phœnix once more found its way there, to be a marvel to all the people of Heliopolis.

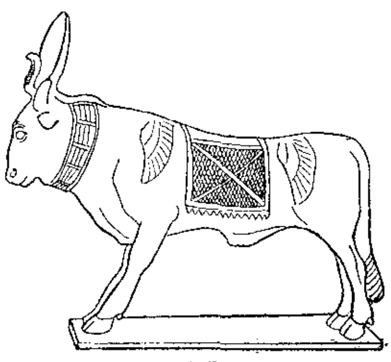


FIG. 31. APIS BULL. (Hilton Price Collection.)

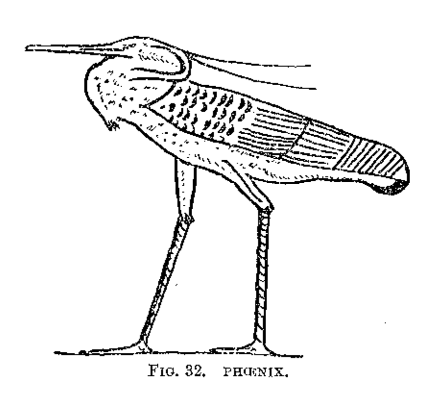


FIG. 32. PHŒNIX.

In the case of such a living presentment of the god, some of his divinity would inevitably be transferred to the bird, and the humbler classes would feel almost more attracted by this god who moved among them, and could be seen by his worshippers, than by the image which, concealed in the Temple in the holy of holies, was hidden from the eyes of the faithful, and only shown at the great festivals.

Eventually these revered animals were recognized as sacred by the official religion, and considered to be incarnations of the

[1] Metternich Stela 77.

god. Thus, in Apis dwelt the soul of Ptah; and did one of these bulls die he transferred himself to another, and Apis *lives anew*.

Animal worship must have arisen in some such way, and thus it came into being at a very early period. It was a remarkable adjunct to the Egyptian religion, but it did not belong to its original structure. In later times veneration for the sacred cat, monkey, sheep, and serpent increased greatly, and in the last stages of the religion of Egypt, their sacred character extended to all their kind outside the temples, but the ancient faith of the people knew nothing of this craze.

The forms of these various divinities we have sketched here do not correspond with the actual beginnings of Egyptian religion, for to that we have no clue, but only to a very ancient official form which survives in the cults, and also in the carvings and inscriptions of the temples. But the carvings and inscriptions contain much that has to be rejected for this earliest period, and which is the result of the growth of tradition, that inevitable process of transformation which pervaded the Egyptian religion as it does all others.

In its youth a nation may well be satisfied with worshipping the gods which it believes it sees on earth, and with winning their favour by means of offerings and prayers, but a mature nation becomes more intimately acquainted with the deity, and the more intimate it becomes, the more it discards the notion of his unapproachable majesty. Then it is that imagination begins its work, and the divine is represented more and more as human; deities that appear to resemble each other, or that are worshipped in the same locality, are grouped together into one family; the preferences or hatreds of gods for each other become known; the manner in which the world originated becomes clearly defined, and also the order in which the gods reigned.

From century to century story-tellers and poets develop these stories more fully, the details of the myth become richer and more brilliant, until at last the whole fabric of theology is complicated and adorned by their addition and superstructure. Thus in speaking of Thoth, it is no longer the moon that is thought of, but the god who arranged the dispute in the great Hall of Heliopolis, and justified Osiris before his foes. Anubis

no longer means the ancient guardian of the dead, but the friend of Osiris who carried out his burial. It was only in the ritual, with its unchangeable customs, that the old ideas survived, only partially comprehended. But in course of time the influence of the myths made itself felt even in the ritual, and the original Osiris and Isis had to make way for the traditional Osiris and Isis, now widely known among the nations.

It is in this period of mythology that we first know anything of the religion of Egypt; even our earliest texts are full of allusions to the myth. *The day wherein . . . The night wherein . . . That god who . . .* these are expressions we meet with at every turn. But numerous as these allusions are, we understand little of them, for the stories to which they refer are not told us in the texts. If any literature relating to these stories ever existed, it is entirely lost. It is possible that actual mythological writings never existed; it would be quite unnecessary to write down tales familiar to all, passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. We are therefore obliged to draw our knowledge of this important side of Egyptian religion from very doubtful sources, from magic spells, which found their magic character on relations of similar deeds of the gods, from isolated inscriptions of the latest times, or even (and this is actually our main source of knowledge) from Plutarch's account of Isis and Osiris.

It is obvious that the form taken by the stories in these texts is not always the ancient one to which they refer, but we are forced to depend on them, and must be satisfied when here and there they enable us to correct or to amplify our knowledge on some point.

The myths of which we shall now speak are naturally only a small part of the great mass of stories of the gods with which Egypt at one time must have been flooded, and the reader will not be surprised to find that they do not always fit into each other. In each district tradition would necessarily take a form that would assign the most prominent part to the favourite local deity. This is especially apparent in the stories relating to the creation of the world.

In the beginning only chaos existed, Nun, the primeval

waters. Out of this in some way or other the sun god was created. He came into being *while as yet there was no heaven, when neither serpent nor reptile was formed. He came into being in the form of Khepre* (page 10), *and there was nothing that was with him in that place where he was . . . resting in the waters of Nun, and he found no place where he could stand.* Then the god bethought himself in his heart to create other beings, and he begat of himself and spat it out. And what he spat out was the god Shu, and the goddess Tefnet, those two beings who, according to Egyptian belief, supported the heavens. Shu and Tefnet then produced Keb and Nut, the earth god and sky goddess, and Keb and Nut produced Osiris and Set, Isis and Nephthys, *whose children are many on this earth.*



FIG. 33. THE YOUNG SUN GOD IN THE LOTUS BLOSSOM.

This account, taken from a late book of magic,[1] is shown by numerous allusions to have been a tradition known at one time throughout Egypt. Yet these allusions prove that the tradition was variously coloured in different localities. According to some a lotus flower sprang out of the primeval waters on which sat the young sun god as a child. In Eshmunên, however, tradition told of a mound in the waters of Desdes, and of an egg laid in a nest there, from which the sun god was hatched[2] in the same way as the waterfowl of the Egyptian marshes. Eight primeval beings in the form of frogs and serpents took some part in this event, and a cow (which must be connected with the celestial cow) was also present; the young god seated himself on her back, and swam across the water. Abydos boasted *a*

[1] Budge, *Nesiamsu*, p. 147 *et seq.*

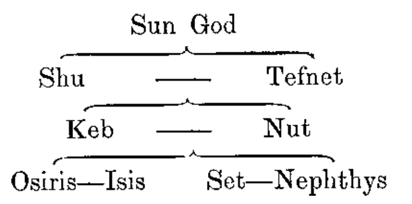
[2] *Mag. Pap.*, Harris, 6, 10; Brugsch, *Oase*, 26, 23; Todt. 85. 13.

birthplace of the sun,[1] and Thebes also prided herself later on possessing *the magnificent primeval mound.*[2]

In Abydos *the gods who issued from the mouth of Re himself* were not Shu and Tefnet, but Shu and the frog goddess Hekt, *the progenitors of the gods.*[3]

There is a variant of the Heliopolitan tradition which is also worthy of notice. Here the god is said to have first appeared *as the Benben stone in the house of the Phœnix.*[4] That he begat of himself may have appeared too incredible to many, and, therefore, from the minor name Yusau, by which the god was distinguished at this occurrence, the name of a consort of the god was formed, Yusas, who was actually worshipped at Heliopolis.

Another section of these myths shows how deeply in other respects they had impressed themselves on the official religion. It generally sets forth the family tree of the gods thus—



These gods, who connect the beginning of the world with human times, had by this time become of great importance to the people of Heliopolis, as the immediate descendants of their great god, and they therefore grouped together this family of Re under a special name, *the Ennead.* This name quickly met with universal acceptance throughout Egypt, and forthwith it was felt necessary to accord a similar honour to the other gods. In addition to the *Great Ennead* a *Lesser* group was constructed composed of Horus, Thoth, Anubis and others. These two groups form *the eighteen gods* who figure even in the earliest texts. Later on, other great towns wished to possess *enneads*

[1] London, 567; Louvre, C. 3.
[2] L.D. III. 24 d; and L.D. IV. 21 c.
[3] Louvre, C. 3; London, 567.
[4] Pyr. Chap. 367 (=N. 663).

of their own, to compete with those of Heliopolis. To do this they displaced one of the nine in order to make room for their local deity, or they even added him to the *ennead*, undisturbed by the fact that in this way their group of nine actually contained ten members.

In connection with the tradition of the origin of the earliest gods, another is supplied by the magical text already quoted, of which we would gladly know more, as again and again we meet with references to it. This is the legend of the *Eye of the Sun*. Unfortunately it has been so much altered by the magicians of the late period, who themselves cannot have understood the ancient texts, that we must abandon any hope of understanding the original. This only is apparent, that for some reason the eye of the god had been taken away from him, and that the two modernized gods Shu and Tefnet restored it to him, and *it wept on his account and mankind came out of the tears which issued from the eye*. And it *was enraged, when it returned and found that another had grown in its place;* then if I understand rightly the god took the eye, and set it as the serpent in his forehead, so that the eye of the sun now *rules the whole world*, for the serpent which Re wears on his forehead is verily the symbol of his might. Any attempt to make sense of this myth is useless; but it should be remembered that the *Eye of the Sun*, as we have just seen, denoted at one time the sun itself, and at another time was a name of Hathor. The statement that mankind originated from his tears arose from a play on the very similar words *remyet*, "tears," and *romet*, "mankind." Similar punning inventions play an important part in all these Egyptian myths. They underlie the above-mentioned story of Shu and Tefnet being produced by spitting. This peculiarity is explained by the importance attached by the Egyptians to the names of things. The name possesses something of the nature of the object, and it is owing to this that the sun god, for instance, is called his own creator because he himself *formed his name*.[1]

We have seen above how the race of Re was propagated and how his grandchildren, the god Keb and goddess Nut, were the earth and the sky; but the earth and the sky were not yet

[1] Totenb. ed. Neville, 17, 6.

separated, and Nut still lay upon her brother Keb. Therefore her father Shu thrust himself between them, and raised her into the heights, and with her he raised into the heights all the gods that had hitherto been created, and Nut took possession of them, counted them and made them into stars. Even the sun itself was not excepted, and now they all sail in their ships over the body of Nut. This was the actual beginning of our present world; when heaven and earth were thus separated from each other, all things fell into their present order.



FIG. 34. SHU SUPPORTING NUT, ON WHOSE BACK ARE THE SUN'S BARKS. KEB LIES BELOW. (Berlin, 8.)

If this myth just quoted gives as a reason for the sun happening to be in the sky, that Shu raised up Nut, a far stranger explanation is given by another and later tradition. The reader will not have forgotten that there were other conceptions of the beginning of the world, as we have already learnt. In this instance the sky is a cow.

Once in ancient days Re, the sun god, ruled as king *over men and gods alike.* In course of time, however, he grew old, his bones were silver, his limbs were gold, his hair real lapis-lazuli. This was observed by men, and they thought blasphemously of him, but the god was not ignorant of their thoughts, and he said to one of his followers: "*Call to me my eye, and Shu and Tefnet, Keb and Nut, together with the fathers and mothers who were with me, when I was in the waters of Nun, and also the god Nun. . . . Thou shalt bring them here quietly, that men may not see it, and that their hearts fail them not. Thou shalt come with them to the Palace, that they may give their opinion. . . .*" *These gods were brought* and they *threw themselves on the ground before his Majesty* and said: "*Speak to us that we may hear.*" Then spake Re to Nun: "*Thou eldest of the gods, from whom I issued and progenitor of the gods. Behold the men who issued out of my eye, and*

who have conceived words against me. Tell me what ye would do with regard to this. I willed not to destroy them until I had heard what ye should say thereto." The Majesty of Nun said: "My son Re, thou god who art greater than thy father and thy creator! Remain thou seated upon thy throne; the fear of thee is yet great, if only thine eye be turned upon those who blaspheme thee."

And now when Re turned his eye upon them, straightway *they fled into the desert, for their hearts feared on account of those things which they had spoken.* The gods, however, gave him further counsel, that he should send his eye down to the blasphemers, in order to smite them, and Re sent his eye and it descended in form of the goddess Hathor. *This goddess, however, returned after she had slain the men in the desert. Then said the Majesty of this god, "Welcome, Hathor. . . ." This goddess made reply: "By thy life, I have been mighty among mankind; it rejoices my heart."*

Then Re feared that Hathor would return next day and entirely destroy mankind. Therefore he said: "*Summon quickly to me swift messengers, who can run like spirits." Immediately such messengers were brought to him and the Majesty of this god said to them: "Hasten to Elephantine and bring me a great quantity of didi."* The god gave this didi (it must have been some kind of fruit with red juice) to the *curly-haired one of Heliopolis* and this spirit pounded it, while servant-maids prepared beer from barley. Then the didi was stirred into the mixture, *and it became like human blood. Seven thousand jars of beer were made and the Majesty of the king Re came with these gods to see this beer. When the morning broke whereon this goddess would slay mankind,* he said, "*I will deliver mankind out of her hands. . . . Carry it forth to the place where she would slay mankind."*

This was done, and the beer was poured out until the fields were flooded four spans deep. *In the morning the goddess sent out, and found it flooded; her face was beautifully mirrored in it. She drank of it, and it pleased her, she returned home drunken and did not recognize men.*

But though the aged god protected mankind from complete

extermination, he did not wish to rule longer over these ungrateful people. "*By my life*," he cried, "*my heart is weary of being among them.*" Then he once more set the aged Nun in the midst, and summoned his daughter the cow-faced Nut: Re placed himself on her back and she bore him up into the heights, where she now forms the heavens. But when Nut looked downwards *she trembled on account of the height.* Then Re called to Shu, saying, "*My son Shu, place thyself under my daughter Nut, place her upon thy head*," and Shu did as he was commanded, and since then he has supported the celestial cow, on whose belly the stars glitter, and the sun sails in his ship.[1] The same book of magic from which this myth is taken, also gives us its version of how the moon originated. Once, while Re sojourned in the heavens, he said, "*Call Thoth unto me," and forthwith he was brought. The Majesty of this god said to Thoth, "Be thou in heaven in my place while I give light to the glorified ones in the under-world. . . . Thou art in my stead, my representative as thou shalt be called; Thoth the representative of Re.*" And now all manner of things were created by a punning speech of Re. He said to Thoth, "*I will cause thee to embrace* (*yonh*) *both the heavens with thy beauty and thy beams," so the moon was created* (*yooh*); and again with reference to the fact that for a representative of Re the position held by Thoth was somewhat lowly, "*I will send* (*hob*) *to thee, those that are greater than thou. . . ." Then came into being the ibis* (*hib*), the bird of Thoth.

Of these traditions, none was more widespread or exercised a greater and more lasting influence on the Egyptian nation than that which tells of the god Osiris, his faithful wife Isis, and his brave son Horus. How this first arose, we cannot conjecture, for the original character of Osiris is doubtful, and that of Isis is equally impossible to discover. That the ancient sun god Horus should here be represented as a child, shows how utterly everything is dislocated.

Like all Egyptian myths, these also must have existed at one time under very different aspects, and we have traces of a

[1] According to the Book of the celestial cow, inscribed in the form of a magical text in the Theban royal tombs.

very different version in two ancient texts,[1] where not only Set appears as murderer of Osiris, but also the beneficent god of the moon and of wisdom. But on the whole the endless versions of the Osiris myth agree on the principal points, and these are accurately reproduced, although greatly amplified in Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris.*

As we have already seen, Keb the earth god and Nut the sky goddess had four children—two sons, Osiris and Set, and two daughters, Isis and Nephthys; Isis became the wife of Osiris, Nephthys of Set; Osiris, however, ruled the world as king and instructed mankind in all that was good. Keb gave him his inheritance,[2] *The government over the two Egypts, . . . he made over to him the guidance of the lands to prosperity, and gave this land into his hand; its water, its air, its plants, all its herds, all that flies and all that hovers, its reptiles and its wild beasts, were given to the son of Nut, and the two lands were contented thereat.* For Osiris was an excellent ruler, *he shone forth on the throne of his fathers as the sun, when he arises on the horizon, when he sheds light on those who were in darkness.* He was just and *established truth in Egypt;* he was moreover (as the Greek version also states) a great warrior, *glorious when he overthrew the enemy and powerful when he slew his foes; the fear of him had fallen upon his enemies and he enlarged the boundaries;* in the same way he ruled excellently over the gods, as *leader of every god, with excellent laws, the Great Ennead praised him, the Lesser Ennead loved him.* Why Set was his foe is not explained in the Greek account, perhaps the reason was considered obvious, for in any oriental royal family of two brothers, if one of them succeeds to the throne, it may be taken for granted that the other will be his natural enemy. We are only told that Set caught Osiris by means of a trick. For a long time he was unable to injure him, owing to the devoted watchfulness of Isis: *She was his safeguard and warded off enemies, for she was subtle, with an excellent tongue, her word did not fail and she was admirable in command.* Therefore Set attempted it by craft,

[1] Pyr. Chap. 14 (=W. 236); 15 (=W. 249).

[2] All that follows, unless otherwise specified, is from the hymn to Osiris on stela 20 of the *Bibliothèque Nationale.* (Ledrain 21–28.)

and he succeeded in compassing the death of Osiris; if Plutarch's account may be believed, he induced him as a jest to lay himself in a chest, which he then closed and flung into the sea.

So Isis was desolate and deprived of the kingdom, and did not know where her husband's body was to be found. She *sought him without wearying; full of mourning she traversed the land, and took no rest until she found him.* Then she sat down close to the body with her sister Nephthys and uttered that lament[1] which has become the model of all funerary lamentations. *Come to thy house, come to thy house, oh god On! Come to thy house, thou who hast no enemies. Oh beautiful stripling, come to thy house that thou mayest see me. I am thy sister whom thou lovest; thou shalt not abandon me. Oh beauteous youth, come to thy house . . . I see thee not and my heart fears for thee, mine eyes long for thee . . . Come to her who loves thee, who loves thee, Wennofre, thou blessed one. Come to thy sister, come to thy wife, thy wife, thou whose heart is still. Come to her who is mistress of thy house. I am thy sister, born of the same mother, thou shalt not be far from me. Gods and men turn their faces towards thee, and together they bewail thee . . . I call to thee and weep so that it is heard even to heaven, but thou dost not hear my voice, and yet I am thy sister whom thou lovedst upon earth! Thou lovedst none beside me, my brother, my brother!*



FIG. 35. ISIS PROTECTING OSIRIS WITH HER WINGS. (Berlin, S.)

Thus she lamented, and the greatest of the gods had pity upon her; Re sent *the fourth of his sons* Anubis down from heaven,[2] to bury Osiris. He joined together the body, of which

[1] From Papyrus P. 3008 of Berlin, known as "Lamentations d'Isis et de Nephthys."

[2] Thus in the early conceptions (Mitt. aus der Oriental. Samml. IX. II, 17): later Anubis figures as child of Osiris and Nephthys.

the members had fallen apart, or (as the later traditions have it) had been rent asunder by Set; wrapped it round with bandages and carried out all that the later Egyptians performed for their dead. Isis, however, *caused breath to enter into it, with her wings*, and thus the dead god began to return to life, he raised his arm, turned himself on one side, and then lifted up his head.[1] Although he could not return to his former life on earth, yet he could enter upon a second existence, and from being king of men, become a king of the dead. But even upon earth he was to triumph, for him and the desolate Isis a champion was yet to arise.

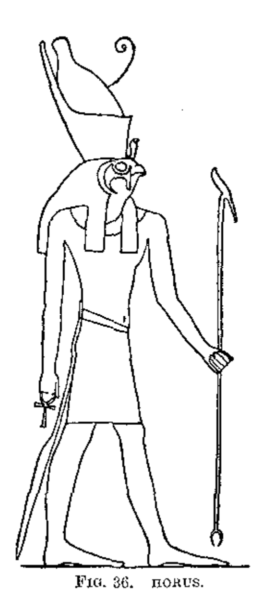


FIG. 36. HORUS.

While Isis hovered in the form of a sparrow-hawk over the body of her husband she became pregnant.[2] To escape the machinations of Set, she thereupon fled to the swamps of the Delta, and in this region, at a spot where later Khemmis stood, she gave birth to a boy, Horus, and *suckled the child in solitude, no one knew where.* The goddess Buto, protectress of the Delta, took friendly care of her. Many evils threatened the child, but the watchfulness and care of Isis averted them all, and there was no picture more beloved by the Egyptians than that of this goddess mother holding her infant on her knee. Horus meanwhile grew and flourished in seclusion, and *when his arm was strong* he fought against Set. It was a fearful fight, which cost Horus an eye, and Set was also severely wounded; Thoth, however, separated the assailants and healed them. He spat on the eye of Horus and it became whole; Horus, however, took the eye and—we must give the story as it is stated in tradition—gave it to his father to eat, and by this offering of filial affection Osiris became *animated and*

[1] Cf. the illustrations Mar. Dend. IV. 68 *et seq.*, 88 *et seq.*

[2] Pyramid. 154. (= T. 277 etc.). Sculptures at Abydos and Denderah (Mar. Dend. IV. 88, 90).

mighty.[1] So Horus triumphed, and as Isis led *him into the hall of Keb* the gods assembled there greeted him joyfully: *Welcome, Horus, son of Osiris: courageous, just, son of Isis and heir of Osiris!* But Set brought an action against him, and, according to the Greek account, disputed the legitimacy of his birth, and with that his right to inherit. But the great gods held a court of justice, they *seated themselves in the hall of Keb*, they tried the case, and *turned their backs on injustice. It was found that the word of Horus was true, there was given to him the property of his father, and he went forth crowned, according to the command of Keb. He took possession of the government of both lands, and the crowns rested upon his head.* It was at this tribunal, of which the scene is always designated as *the great hall* of Heliopolis, that, as the Egyptian texts constantly affirm, Osiris was in some way accused by Set and other enemies—but Thoth, god of wisdom, had adopted his cause, and had made Osiris *true of voice;* the gods declared that Set was defeated, and Osiris placed his foot on him. He then ascended into heaven and now reigns in the height, or—when we accept a subterranean kingdom of the dead—below in the depths, over the dead. He is *the first of those who are in the West,* i.e. the dead, while his son Horus as *first of the living* took over the government of the earth. With Horus the world of the present day began, for it is on his throne that the kings of Egypt sit as his successors.

This is only a short sketch that we have been able to give, of the legend of Osiris, and there are of course other confused ideas connected with various conceptions of this multiform myth. But the reader will not fail to discover in what respect this legend differs from others, and what rendered it so popular among the Egyptian people. It is the human element, the justification of Osiris, the wifely devotion and mother love of Isis, the filial piety of Horus. These captivated the Egyptian nation at a period which must have been very remote. At the same time they formed the people's conceptions of the future life, teaching them that after death the just and upright were more valued than those who had possessed authority and power

[1] Pyr. 145. (= T. 173) an 15 (= W. 267). Healing by means of spitting is frequently mentioned.

on earth. Beginning with matters relating to the dead, these conceptions of Osiris and Isis, of Horus and Set, extended their influence more and more widely, until the entire religion was under their dominion. The most ancient form of religion at which we can arrive had been coloured and transformed by the Osiris legend, so much so, that we can almost distinguish it as an Osirian religion distinct from the belief of prehistoric times of which we have no record.

From this Osiris legend, and from other legends of the gods which have now disappeared, the misapplied learning of later times constructed a history of primeval events in which the gods are introduced as *kings of Upper and Lower Egypt*, each one with the number of centuries and years that he reigned. Keb, Osiris, Set and Horus follow in order, then Thoth and Maat; then all manner of obscure gods, and, finally, the human kings, the *Servants of Horus*, end the primitive period.[1] These absurdities were carried so far that formal titles were invented for the gods, similar to those borne by earthly kings, and as early as the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, Osiris appears on a gravestone[2] with two correctly formed royal names: *Horus "who set right the slaughter of the two worlds," king of Upper and Lower Egypt; "Osiris Wennofre."*

It must not be overlooked that the first of these names refers to some part of the Osiris legend which is unknown to us; it appears as if the god, on entering into his kingdom, found Egypt plunged in warfare, and brought peace to it.

This sketch of the Egyptian religion would not be complete if we omitted at the close to mention a being of sacred character who, according to our ideas, was certainly not one of the gods, and yet in the official religion was reckoned among them from the beginning; any one reading an inscription of the Old Kingdom, and finding it stated that so-and-so for his merits was *beloved of his god*, would naturally imagine that in some way the god was intended, whom the aforesaid man, with his household, had served; this, however, is not the case; it is the king who is thus designated. And again, when reading a tomb inscrip-

[1] According to the Turin Papyrus.
[2] Louvre C. 2.

tion of the twelfth dynasty, we gain the impression that, to the nobles of this period, the king was actually as much a divinity as were any of the gods; they never weary of glorifying him, and testifying to their reverence for him, while the gods themselves are only mentioned incidentally. But it was not at this period of rapid changes that this climax of Byzantinism arose; the divinity of the kings belongs to the primitive dogmas of Egypt. In two points only is the king distinguished from the actual gods. While Re, Osiris or Horus are styled *great god*, the king has to content himself with being called *good god*, and it is only after his death that he attains to the higher title. Also during his lifetime he was accorded no formal worship with temples, offerings, and priests, at any rate not in the early times. It must have been at the close of that period that the following extravagances of poetical comparison were adopted. The king is described as the sun god on earth, his palace is the *horizon;* when he shows himself *he arises,* when he dies *he sets.* Thus he wears as his diadem the fire-spitting serpent, which the sun god bears on his forehead, and which destroys his enemies.

Again, the king is compared to Horus, the son of Osiris, when he succeeded his father on the throne as *Chief of the living.* In this connection he is called *Horus, the Lord of the Palace,* and his palace itself is called the *solitude* because Horus grew up in solitude. Then again, the king is called *the son of Re;* it might be thought that this was only intended to mean that the royal house was ultimately descended from the gods, and therefore from Re. But this is not so; in two temples of the New Kingdom[1] we find illustrated texts which show us how this divine paternity must be understood. When the newly-made Queen is *established in the beauty of her house,* the supreme god approaches her, having *taken the form of her husband. She is awaked by the sweet scent* which surrounds him, and *smiles on the god.* He goes to her *and shows himself to her in his divine form, and she exults over the sight of his beauty, and after this, when this god has done with her all that he desired,* he tells her that she shall give birth to a son, who shall be king over Egypt. It

[1] Gayet, *Louxor*, pl. 71; Naville, *Deir el Bahri*, pl. 47.

will be remembered that an analogy to this extravagant craze is to be found in the family history of the Hellenistic princes.

The sacred character of the royal house extended also to its insignia and attributes. The various crowns especially appear as sacred objects, which themselves possess divine powers, and the principal functionary in charge of the royal jewellery serves it in the character of a priest.[1]

In the next chapter we hope to show how this deification of the king is apparent in the temple scenes, where he appears among the gods as the sole representative of the world.

[1] British Museum, 574.

CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS OF THE EARLY PERIOD

WE cannot here attempt to describe all the religious ceremonies, to discuss the various plans of the temple buildings, or to define the distinctions between the different orders of priests; the immense mass of material renders it impossible to do so. We must confine ourselves to a rapid review of some of the most important characteristics of the outward forms of the Egyptian religion.

When the Egyptian named his temple *the house of the god*, the name was a literal expression of his belief: the deity dwelt in the temple, as a man lives in his house, and the priests, *the servants of the god*, who supplied him with food and attendance, were his household servants. This appears also in the religious ceremonies, and perhaps in the arrangement of the temple buildings—although in historical times this belief can have been little more than an obsolete idea.

Each temple must originally have been dedicated to one single deity who was considered to be its *lord*, but owing to the natural anxiety to secure the favour of other gods for the city others were added as secondary deities, and in the greater temples their numbers steadily increased in the course of centuries. Two of these, a goddess and a god, were generally regarded as the wife and child of the principal deity. Thus Ptah of Memphis had Sekhmet for his consort, and Nefer-tem for his son, and Amon had Mut assigned to him as wife, and the moon god Khons as his child. The goddesses had at least one child: thus Hathor of Denderah had the boy Ehi, and Buto a god Horus.

Of the temples of the earliest period, which, as we have already seen (p. 6), consisted merely of simple huts, nothing has of

course survived to our times, but of the great buildings of early historical times also very little remains, for during the long course of centuries they were so frequently rebuilt, restored, and enlarged, that as a rule only occasional blocks of stone remain in evidence of the original construction. Nevertheless, from the scanty remains of these early temples which exist here and there, we can form a correct idea of their original plan. In appearance they were essentially the same as the great buildings which later arose in their place. The form anciently given to a temple remained the model for all periods, and if we now proceed to describe a temple of the New Kingdom, it is with the certainty that our description applies equally to one of the early period.

At the present day we are accustomed to see the magnificent ruins of Egyptian temples situated in open spaces or on cultivated ground, and we involuntarily picture them in ancient days among such surroundings. In reality, however, these temples were inside the towns, amidst the medley of buildings and the narrow filthy streets of a southern city. The noisy bustle that went on around them was shut out by the high wall that enclosed the precincts, and rendered them pure and peaceful spots in the midst of an impure and noisy world. At one time the way to the temple was through the streets of the town, but it was necessary to make a more open road for the convenience of the processions at festivals. For this a straight broad *road of the god* was carried right through the inhabited quarter, and lined on both sides with statues of rams, lions, or other sacred animals, as though they were intended to form a guard of stone to ward off the crowds from the road of the god. At the point where this road reached the surrounding wall of the temple, rose the great gateway, the so-called pylon, an enormous entrance flanked by two high towers with sloping walls.

Behind this gateway lay the first large space, an open court surrounded by colonnades. Here the great festivals were celebrated, in which a large number of the citizens were entitled to take part. Behind this court there was a hall supported by columns, the place appointed for all manner of ceremonies, and behind this again lay the holy of holies, the chamber where

the statue of the god had his dwelling. In adjoining apartments were the statues of the wife and son of the god. This was the essential part of a temple; naturally there would be various additional chambers to contain the sacred utensils, and for special purposes of the religious cults. A further characteristic of every temple is that from front to rear each apartment was less lofty and light than the preceding. Into the court the Egyptian sun blazed with uninterrupted splendour; in the hall its light was admitted to a modified extent through the entrance and through windows in the roof; in the holy of holies reigned profoundest darkness.

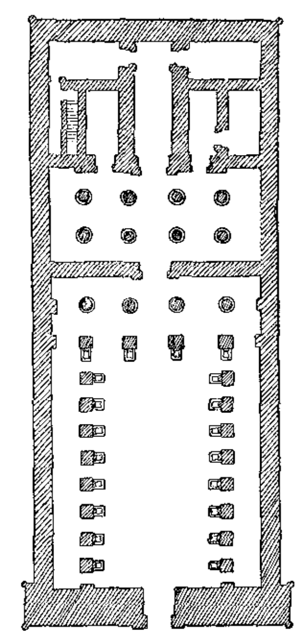


FIG. 37. GROUND-PLAN OF THE TEMPLE OF RAMSES III. KARNAK.

The decorations of the temple were essentially the same in all cases. The walls and columns were adorned with brilliantly coloured reliefs, and with inscriptions no less brightly coloured; on the outside walls were represented the deeds of the king who built the temple; inside the scenes referred to the cult of the god, and pictured the events that occurred every day within those walls. In front of the pylon, on the outside, stood the obelisks, two stone pillars, such as no doubt it was the custom to place in front of other buildings. Behind them, on the walls of the pylon, there rose four high masts, from whose summit waved bright-coloured flags. In front of the gateway or inside the court there were seated colossal statues of the king, as protector of the sanctuary built by him. Other statues disposed in the different parts of the temple show him worshipping the god with prayers or offerings. Statues of other gods were often placed in the temple, as though they were intended to serve its great lord, such as Nile gods, who bring him the products of their waters, or lion-headed Sekhmet, to ward off his foes.

The great altar, which was merely a raised space on which food was laid, stood most usually in the centre of the colonnaded court; smaller tables on which food and drink could be placed were provided in other parts of the temple.

This, as we have described it, is the usual type of the Egyptian temple, which we find almost everywhere, although in certain cases the plan may be greatly altered owing to additional

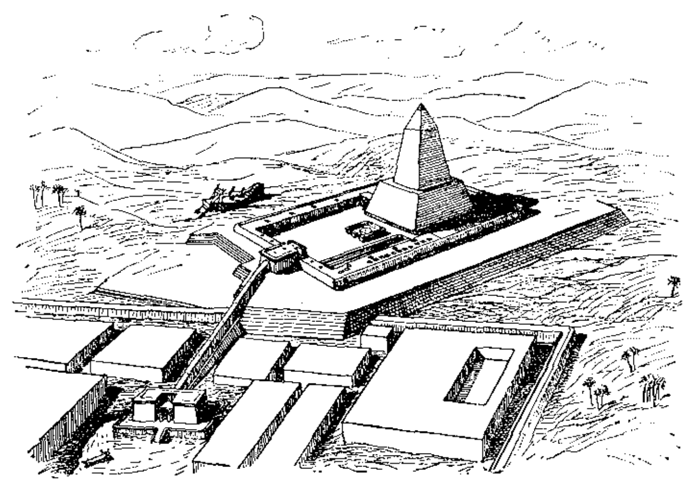


FIG. 38. THE TEMPLE OF ABU GURAB. (Reconstructed.)

buildings or to the peculiar conditions of the building site, or to other special circumstances. There is, however, a small number of temples entirely divergent from this type which we must not omit to mention, as it includes the temple of Abu Gurab, which has so greatly enriched the Berlin Museum. These are the temples of the sun of the fifth dynasty, which have been supposed, with some degree of probability,[1] to be copies of the celebrated temple of the sun at Heliopolis, which is lost to us. According to tradition the kings of the fifth dynasty were descended from a high-priest of Re, and, in fact, we find that they accorded special honours to that god. Most of these kings built a new sanctuary for him close to the royal city, at which the most

[1] I follow here information communicated verbally by Professor Schäfer.

important personages of the court officiated as high-priests. These temples, which bore names such as *favourite dwelling of Re,* were large open courts, at the further end of which stood an immense obelisk on a substructure of pyramidal form; this was the principal part of the temple, and was no doubt regarded as the dwelling of the god; possibly it was a copy of the celebrated Benben stone at Heliopolis, which was of similar form. In front of the obelisk there stood the great altar of the god: in addition the court merely contained some small offices necessary for the cult, so that the worship of the god was carried on in the open air. The decorations of the temple on the whole did not differ greatly from those usually employed but in one of the side passages which led to the base of the obelisk the pictured scenes differed entirely: the seasons of the year are bringing offerings to the king of all the events of each period, both on land and water, the growth of the plants, the increase of animals, the labours of mankind. It is possible that these lively scenes found a place in the temple because it is the sun god who causes all things to live and increase.

If these sanctuaries of Re existed without a special cultus statue, because the obelisk was revered as a dwelling-place of the god; according to Egyptian ideas this in itself was a strange departure from accepted custom, for in every other cult the statue of the god was the most important object in the temple. On it rested—as later inscriptions state—the *soul* of the god when it came out of heaven, as upon its body.[1] Frequently, however, as these cultus statues are referred to, and many as are the copies of them that we possess, both large and small, yet not one of them appears to have survived to our day; all seem to have fallen victims to the hatred of the Christians at the downfall of the Egyptian religion. In the later temples, however, we possess descriptions and representations from which we can form an accurate idea of them. The temple of Hathor of Dendera possessed, among others, the following sacred properties:

[1] Dümichen, *Temp. Inscr.* xxv.; Dümichen, *Resultate*, 38–41.

Hathor, painted (?) wood, copper, inlaid eyes, height 3 *ells,* 4 *spans, and* 2 *fingers.*

Isis, painted acacia wood, eyes inlaid, height 1 *ell.*

Horus, painted wood, inlaid eyes, height 1 *ell and* 1 *finger.*

Buto, painted wood, gold eyes, height 1 *ell,* etc.[1]

These ancient sacred statues were, therefore, not of great size —by far the greater number were only one ell, *i. e.* 16 inches high, and as a rule were made of wood. It was imperative that figures of the god should be drawn about at festivals, and this it would not be possible to do with the heavy stone statues. Then again, most of the figures of the gods were formed on the same model, and were only distinguished by the different heads, crowns, and attributes. The beard was a plaited tress with the end turned up, similar to that worn at the present day by the tribes of Central Africa. If the clothing was represented, it generally consisted, in the case of the gods, of a peculiar short garment suspended by straps over the shoulders, while the goddesses wore the usual female attire. In the case of certain figures of the primitive period, that of Ptah, for instance (see p. 17), the clothing is not indicated, and the figures have much the appearance of mummies.

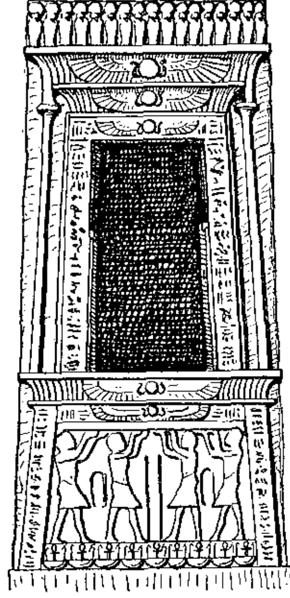


FIG. 39. CHAPEL FROM THE TEMPLE AT PHILÆ. (Paris.)

The usual abode of the god was his chapel, in the last and most sacred apartment of the temple. This chapel was frequently made out of one single block of hard granite, which surrounded the sacred statue with an impenetrable wall; in front a bronze framework was inserted and fitted with double doors. The place where this chapel stood, *the great place* as it was called, was now the spot where the daily ceremonies were conducted.

[1] Dümichen, *Resultate*, 34–36; 39–40.

Early in the morning the officiating priest stood in front of the holy of holies and commenced his performance, which in itself might have been completed in half-an-hour, but which must have lasted for hours, as every separate action had to be divided into a number of different actions, and each one of these had to be accompanied by a long speech. Would that there had been in these long speeches some trace of feeling for the sacredness of the place, the majesty of the god; but all personal feeling had long disappeared from this ritual, and it was celebrated in a way that could not well have been more absurd, as though the whole religion in every temple consisted only of the history of Horus and Set, and that of Osiris. When the priest loosened the sealed cord that closed the chapel, he had to say: *The cord is broken, and the seal loosened—I come, and I bring to thee the eye of Horus, thine eye belongs to thee, Horus.* Further, when he broke the clay of the seal, he said: *the clay is loosened, the waters of heaven are opened, the veins of Osiris are stretched out—I do not come to drive away the god from his throne; I come to set the god on his throne. Thou remainest on thy great throne, god N., I have access* (?) *to the gods—an offering which the king gives—I am pure.* He then draws the bolt; *the finger of Set is withdrawn from the eye of Horus, that is excellent. The finger of Set is withdrawn from the eye of Horus, that is excellent. I loosen the leather behind the god. Oh god N., take thy two feathers and thy white crown out of the Horus eye, the right eye out of the right eye, the left eye out of the left eye. Thy beauty belongs to thee, oh god N.; thou naked one, clothe thyself . . . I am a priest, the king himself sends me, that I may behold the god.* And now, as the doors open, and the god is revealed, the priest says, *The gates of heaven open, the gates of earth are undone. Homage* (?) *was paid to Keb when the gods said to him, "Thou dwellest upon thy throne." The gates of heaven are opened, and the nine gods appear radiant, the god N. is exalted upon his great throne, and the great Ennead is exalted upon their great throne. Thy beauty belongs to thee, oh god N., thou naked one, clothe thyself. . .* We do not understand all of these sentences, but what we do understand are always the same scanty ideas; the Horus eye as the prototype of all gifts (p. 34). Set, who wounded Horus in the eye,

Horus who was to be seated on the throne of his father; Keb and Osiris, and all that belonged to their circle. And this ritual was the same for all the gods, for as far back as we know anything of them, no temple was able to exist without Osiris and his family.

The ceremonies also, which the priest performed, were in the main the simplest possible. After he had offered incense and

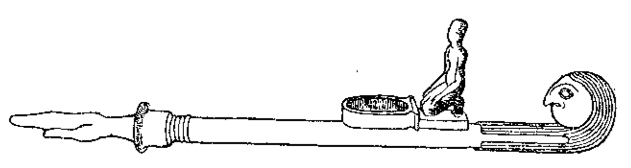


FIG. 40. INCENSE BURNER, bronze. (Hilton Price Collection.)

had filled the holy of holies with the perfume, he approached the chapel and opened it. He saluted the god with repeated prostrations, and with chanting or repetition of hymns. He then took his vessels, which were close at hand in a box, and began the daily toilet of the god. Twice he sprinkled water over the statue from four jugs, he clothed it with linen bandages which were white, green, red, and reddish in colour, he anointed it with oil, painted it with green and black paints, and completed its toilet in other respects. Finally he fed the god, by setting before him a variety of food and drink, bread, geese, haunch of beef, wine and water. Flowers also could no more be omitted from an Egyptian table of offerings than they could be from the dining-table of a noble.

These daily offerings, the so-called *permanent* ones, were provided for out of the regular income of the temple; but in addition there were special arrangements for supplies for the great offerings on feast days. The amount of these offerings varied greatly, according to the wealth or the poverty of the different temples, and we must not take for granted that so much was everywhere offered to the gods, as was done later in the colossal temples of the New Kingdom. And yet in early times an extraordinary amount of food was disposed of in the great temples, and we cannot refrain from questioning what can have been done with these good things after they had lain the

correct time before the god. It is well known that other ancient nations sought to ensure their offerings reaching the deity by burning them, and in Egypt also this custom was not unknown, but judging from the evidence of the later period we find it always remained the exception, and as the food would certainly not be allowed to be wasted, some use must have been found for it. From the grave inscriptions we learn of one method of disposing of it which can only have been a make-believe. The dead desired to share in the food from the altar of the god, *after the god had satisfied himself therewith.*[1] Thus it is evident that the divine offerings were subsequently presented to the distinguished dead of whom there was a statue in the temple (cf. chap. v.). In the same way a man of the New Kingdom desired that his body might be wrapped in clothing, *of that which the god had taken off;*[2] thus the bandages in which the statue of the god was daily wrapped could also be offered to the dead as new clothing. But without doubt the ordinary use of the offerings, and one of which no mention is made, must have been that the priests appropriated them for their own use and that of their households, when they had lain a sufficient length of time before the god. On feast days the assembled crowds in the temples shared this food and the festivals ended with a general banquet. A record of the New Kingdom[3] also tells us that different provision was made for the different ranks of the visitors: meals ready arranged were brought to the god of *good bread, meat, cakes, and flat loaves*, and of these 15 were in *show baskets*, 35 in *gold baskets*, and 895 in *food baskets*. While these and other good things were enjoyed by the princes and high officials, the ordinary visitors to the festival of many days' duration received 90,250 ordinary loaves as provisions.

As we have already seen, it was part of the regular duties of the priests to extol the god in songs in the daily ceremonial as well as at great festivals. We do not know whether these songs were merely recited or whether they were also sung; but we

[1] For instance, Cairo, 20514; 20542.

[2] *Tomb of Paheri. El Kab.* Pl. ix. 4.

[3] Harris Papyrus, 17a, 14 *et seq.*, to the end of the list of the feast of Medinet Habu.

cannot be far wrong when we imagine that their recitation would be a very perfunctory performance. They show very little poetical feeling, and with few exceptions they are all formed on the same model: they recount the names of the god, his crowns and his temples, and refer occasionally to his characteristics and the legends concerning him. *Praise to thee, Osiris, son of Nut, who wearest the horns and dost lean on a high pillar; to whom the crown was given, and joy before the nine gods; whose might was formed by Atum in the hearts of men, of gods, and of the illumindted. To whom dominion was given in Heliopolis; great in being in Busiris, feared in the two sacred places. Great in power in Rosetta, a lord of might in Ehnas, a lord of strength in Tenent. Greatly beloved on earth, of good memory in the palace of the gods. Great of appearance in Abydos; to whom justification was given before the nine assembled gods, for whom the judgment was set in the great hall, which is at Her-wer. Before whom the great ones of might feared; before whom the great ones rose up upon their mats. For whom Shu hath aroused fear, and whose power Tefnet hath created. To whom Upper and Lower Egypt come bowing down, because his fear is so great, and his might so powerful.*[1] Beyond this this priestly poet could find nothing to say of this most human of all the gods.

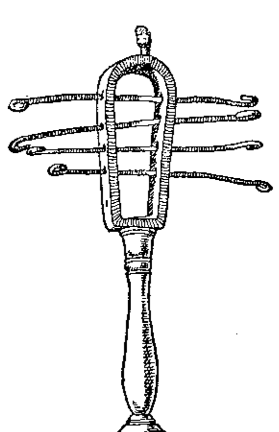


FIG. 41. SISTRUM. (Berlin, 2768.)

The oft-mentioned mode of worship —*hnw*—appears to have consisted not only in songs, but also in an ecstatic shouting, while the performers knelt and beat their breasts with clenched fists. Music played no great part in the ceremonies, although later *a glorious harp* was a necessary part of the temple property in order *to praise the beauty of the god in all his names in his processions.*[2] In general the musical performances were left to the priestesses, who clattered and rattled with their sistra and castanets before Hathor or some other deity, just as the ladies

[1] Louvre, C. 30.

[2] Mar. *Karnak*, 15.

of the harem were accustomed to do, when dancing before their lord. It was the same with dancing, when occasionally at special religious festivals the people expressed their joy by leaping and jumping.

There was no temple which did not celebrate some such festival. As a rule there were one or more principal feasts, celebrated on appointed days, when some of the most important events of the history of the god had occurred, perhaps the day when he was born, or on which he had defeated his enemies. Also they would celebrate the *beginning of periods of time*, such as New Year's day, or the first of the month. On these days, when the whole town *is in festival* as was said, the religious ceremonies were more ornate in character. The ritual was enriched with special hymns, the temple was decorated, and there would also be an illumination, a *lighting of lamps*, both there and in the town. The offerings, as we have already remarked, would be so greatly increased that even the throng of guests who had crowded to the temple for the festival could be sufficiently supplied. The principal business on such a day was, however, that the people should *behold the beauty of their lord;* that the statue of the god should be exhibited. It was taken out of its chapel, and carried out of the holy of holies in a light shrine, accompanied by priests bearing a number of sacred objects and symbols on staves. The shrine was then set down to be gazed at, at various places in the fore-part of the temple, or in the town, on stone pedestals, somewhat similar in form to the Greek altars; incense was burnt, and prayers and offerings made to it. At last came the great moment, when the hangings

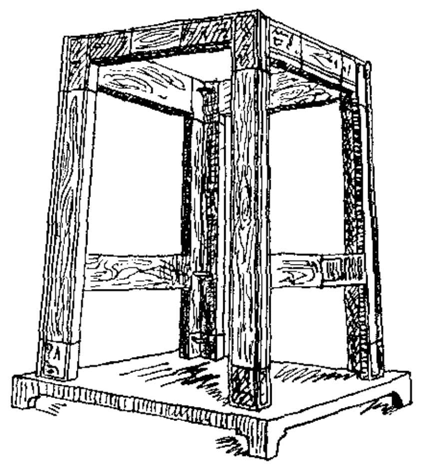


FIG. 42. PORTABLE SHRINE OF BRONZE AND WOOD. Presented by Amasis to a Temple at Thebes. (Berlin, 8708.)

which closed in the sides of the shrine were withdrawn by the priests, and when the excited crowd could hail with shouts the small statue, which in their eyes was the most sacred object in the world.

The litter on which the shrine was borne was frequently made in the form of a ship, for the Egyptians, whose traffic, owing to the nature of the country, was almost entirely conducted by water, looked on the ship as the natural mode of transport. The god would also possess an actual ship, in case he had to cross the Nile for a festival, or, as sometimes happened, he had occasion to visit the friendly god of another city. As a rule the processions on feast days did not travel so far; they remained in the neighbourhood of the temple, and made their way perhaps to a second temple in the town or to some other sacred place. The reason why such and such a place should be visited, and that such and such customs should be observed there, may be sought in the traditions concerning the god, for the festival was frequently the celebration of some special day in his life. This led in very early times to the performance of scenes taken from the legends of the god. Thus we learn from a memorial stone in the Berlin museum that a distinguished treasurer who held office at Abydos under Sesostris III., and who took part in the Osiris festivals, twice had the honour of *overthrowing the enemies of Osiris,* on one occasion *on the day of the great strife.* Ramses IV., however, kindled in the same place *a light to Osiris on the day when his mummy was embalmed. He drove Set away from him, when he would have robbed him of his limbs. He established his son Horus as heir to his throne.* And at the Horus festival at Abydos the same king spat on *his eye after it had been seized by him who had subdued him* (see p. 34). *He gave him the throne of his father and his heritage in the whole land. He made his word true* (see p. 35) *on the day of giving judgment. He caused him to pass through Egypt and the red land as the representative of Har-akhte.*[1] At another performance, the feast of the setting up of the Osiris column (p. 16), which was originally performed at Memphis, one

[1] Stela Ramses IV., Cairo (Mar. *Ab.* II. 54–55).

of these columns was raised by cords until it stood upright. It was Osiris who was thus raised up, after a representation of his burial had been acted on the previous day. This ended with performances, the meaning of which we cannot grasp. Some part of the crowd leapt and danced, others fell upon his neighbour, and he who did so called out, *I have seized Horus;* again, other groups pommelled each other with sticks and fists, some represented the two towns of Pe and Dep, out of which the ancient capital of Buto arose; and finally four herds of oxen and asses were driven four times round the town.[1] We know too little of these legends to be able to understand the whole of this. It is probable that these were preliminaries preceding the enthronement of Horus, which was performed on the following day. As a fact these performances were later combined with another, that referred to the coming to the throne of the earthly king, to his jubilee, the celebrated Sed feast, which was celebrated for the first time thirty years after his appointment as *successor to the throne,* and was then repeated every three years.

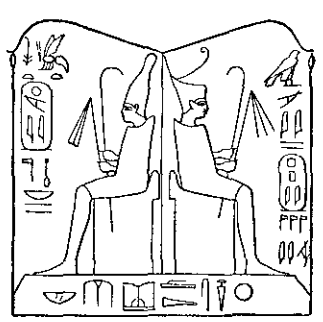


FIG. 43. THE KING, PEPI I. (*circa* 2500 B.C.), in the Hall of Jubilee. (From Hammamat.)

Of what a multitude of offerings, burnings of incense, and processions this great festival consisted, which statues of the gods were placed in their shrines, and which were carried about on poles, what priests and what nobles of the kingdom took part therein, and how finally the king seated himself in a special festal hall, first on one throne, and then on another; all this was set forth in long rows of scenes in various temples, presumably in that one where the king in question celebrated his festival.

It cannot have appeared strange to an Egyptian that this royal festival should be of a religious character, for was not his king a god, and in the temples and in the service of the gods he must have been accustomed to hear of the king and of the king

[1] Brugsch, *Thesaurus,* 1190 *et seq.*

only. And here we meet with one of the most remarkable aspects of the Egyptian religion.

From the very first the rulers of Egypt considered themselves bound to present gifts to the more important temples of their dominions, and to provide for their building; this was for them a natural obligation. Furthermore it became the custom, in any temple which had been richly endowed by a king, to implore the blessing of the gods upon him before all others, while the temple inscriptions and scenes served as a perpetual reminder of him. But, strangely enough, the fiction soon arose that every temple was built exclusively by the king and was also supported by him, so that all that was contributed by the devout citizens, and the revenues belonging to the temple, were entirely ignored. This continued throughout all periods, and even the Greek kings and Roman emperors were pleased to figure as the builders of all the temples that arose during their reigns.

But what was this fiction compared with the monstrous conception which in all the temples caused the king alone to take the place of mankind. For the official religion as it was accepted in the temples, there existed only the god and the king; he served them, he built their temples, and made offerings to them, and they rewarded *their beloved son* for his pious devotion with *life for millions of years*, with victory over his enemies and everlasting fame. The gods are no longer the gods of the Egyptian people, they are the gods of Pharaoh *their son*. And this relation of the sovereign to the deities is carried yet farther. If the king built a temple he did it not so much from devotion to the god, as for his own future glorification. *He has made this as his monument*, thus begins every dedicatory inscription from the earliest times, and then follows the name of the temple which the king has built to the god *his father*. Certainly these are set phrases and inherited customs, but that such phrases and customs could have been evolved during the growth of the nation, and that later no one should have found them incongruous, is an undeniable proof of the poverty of this official religion.

It is a natural result of this idea that the temple scenes give the impression that the priests are not present, but that the king takes their place. On all the walls the offerings and cere-

monies are represented as they were performed before the god, but it is always the king who is officiating. Although we can understand that the king on some special occasion may have occasionally exercised priestly functions, yet that he should have taken part in the ceremonies of the countless temples of his dominions can only have been a theoretical possibility. The actual performers at the Egyptian ceremonies must have been the priests, even though they represented themselves in the rituals as merely the delegates of the king.[1]

The natural relationship imposed on the more important families by the charge of a sanctuary which had existed in their town since the memory of man, prevailed in Egypt in the earliest times, and again in the Middle Kingdom we find in the greater temples that the priesthood remained in certain families, whose members generally adopted it as a secondary profession. And here we speedily arrive at another development; certain priestly orders are connected with certain professions. Thus the high judicial functionaries of the Old Kingdom are at the same time priests of the goddess of truth, the physicians are priests of Sekhmet, the great artists are priests of Ptah.

At the head of every temple was a high-priest who acted as *overseer of all the sacred offices*, he is *initiated into divine books and divine things* and *gives directions to the priests as regulating* the festivals. He has *a loud voice when he praises the god* and *a pure hand when he brings flowers and offers water and food upon the altar*.[2] The administration of the temple property is incumbent on him, and in war he has also to command the contingent provided by his temple.

In the great sanctuaries these high-priests frequently bore special antiquated titles. Thus at Heliopolis the high-priest was called *He who is great in beholding*, perhaps because he could *behold* at pleasure *the beauty of his lord*, i. e. the statue of the god; while at Eshmunên he was *great of the five*. At Memphis, where Ptah the god of artificers was worshipped, the title of the high-priest was *the chief of the artificers*, and in the Old Kingdom he held the position of superintendent of sculpture and all such

[1] Mariette, *Abydos*, I. 24.
[2] Griffith, *Siut.* I. 216–217; 237–239.

artistic work; it appears that originally this combination of spiritual and worldly offices was shared by two persons, but towards the end of the Old Kingdom the king transferred *every divine affair, and every duty that was in charge of the two high-priests,* to Teti-Sabu, because his majesty trusted him especially.[1] The important position held by such high-priests was denoted by the peculiar decoration worn by them, of a character which, as the accompanying sketch shows, must evidently have dated from the earliest times. In the smaller temples all these accessories were of course less insisted on, and the dynasts of provincial towns were generally contented with the title *Superintendent of the priests.*



FIG. 44. HIGH-PRIEST OF MEMPHIS, WITH DECORATION ON THE BREAST AND WITH THE SIDE LOCK. (Berlin, 12410.)

These "priests" (literally divine servants) were not all of the same class. There were the *Kherheb*, whose duty appears to have been to read the ancient rituals at the ceremonies, and whose second title, *scribe of the divine books*, designates them clearly as learned students of the ancient sacred literature. What were the original functions of the so-called *we'b* priests is shown by the name, which is derived from the word for "pure"; we find them in sacrificial scenes, after examining the blood of the animal, declaring that it is *pure.* Other priestly titles which are frequently mentioned, such as that of the *divine fathers,* offer no explanation of their meaning.

As we have said, for the greater number of these clerics the priesthood was only a subsidiary occupation; they formed the *hourly priesthood* of the temple or, as we may perhaps express it, alternating priests, who were divided into four sets, and alternately relieved each other in their duties. This at any rate was the system during the Middle Kingdom, when we have clear information regarding these matters, more especially from deeds belonging to a temple built by Sesostris II. to Anubis, in

[1] Mariette, *Mastabas*, E. 3.

the town close to his pyramid. These papyri, which are now at Berlin, inform us that in addition to eight minor officials the permanent staff of the temple consisted only of the *prince and superintendent of the temple* (i. e. the high-priest) and the *chief kherheb,* who were thus the administrators of the temple property and the directors of the ceremonies; nine other priests took regular turns there; a *superintendent of classes,* a *temple scribe,* an *ordinary kherheb,* etc., and each time one of these classes entered on their duties, they took over the sanctuary and all its contents from the outgoing class, and relieved them of their charge.

It will be seen that the power of the lay element in religious matters was not absent, notwithstanding the fiction of the king as sole priest. The laity were specially prominent in the worship of the goddesses; almost every lady of early times styled herself a priestess either of Neit or of Hathor.

In this active participation of the people in the religious ceremonies there lay a security that, independently of the official religion, the relationship of individuals to their gods should not be lost. Those who were not connected with the temple as priests, might yet have it in their power to pray and offer sacrifices there to the *god of the city.*

CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS OF THE NEW KINGDOM

DURING that earliest period, the religious beliefs of which we sketched in our first chapter, the religion of the Egyptian nation became more and more complicated. The principal gods of the people were worshipped as local gods under various names. In the historical period this particularism came to an end owing to the fact that at three periods, which lasted for many centuries, the whole country was united in one great commonwealth. This drew the religion into closer unity, and thus much which originally belonged to one town only, became gradually the common property of the whole nation. The earliest example of such dissemination we have already (p. 27) seen in the Osiris myth; as early as the Old Kingdom the belief in this god of the dead prevailed from the Delta to Elephantine, and in Memphis, Sokar, the ancient local god of the dead, appeared only as another name of Osiris. After the Middle Kingdom we meet with other similar combinations, even among gods who originally had no connection with each other. In the temple at Koptos the goddess Mut of Thebes was called at one time Bast, and at another time Sekhmet of Memphis,[1] although she was neither cat- nor lion-headed, but figured as a vulture. At the same period the god Min of Koptos was forced to appear merely as another name for the universally beloved Horus. He is called *the son of Osiris*, and among other borrowed phrases, it is related of him *that he chastised his foes, and protected his father . . . seized the crown, and that the inheritance of his father was given to him.*[2] With the sun god also, the great ruler of the world, were combined deities who

[1] Petrie, *Koptos*, X. 2 ; p. 12. [2] Mariette, *Cat. d'Abydos*, 813.

had nothing in common with him, possibly at the time when the kings of the fifth dynasty venerated Re before all other gods; Khnum god of Elephantine, Sobk the ancient water god, and Amon of Thebes were transformed into Khnum-Re, Sobk-Re, and Amon-Re. Few of these combinations can have become popular, but a different fate awaited the most important of them all, and for a thousand years the hybrid Amon-Re remained the foremost of all the Egyptian gods.

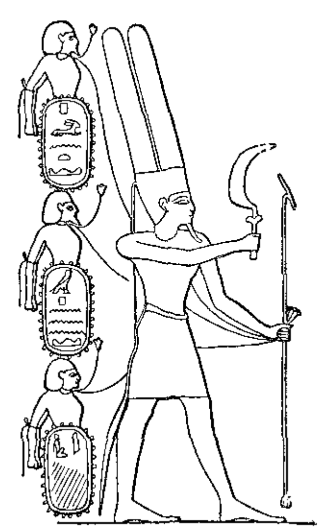


FIG. 45. AMON-RE HANDING THE SICKLE-SHAPED SWORD TO THE KING, AND DELIVERING FOREIGN NATIONS TO HIM. (From the Temple of Medinet Habu.)

During the early period, the town of Thebes in Upper Egypt was so unimportant that the ancient religious texts do not refer in any way to it or its gods; neither did the ancient chiefs of the neighbourhood revere its god Amon, but worshipped Mont, the god of the neighbouring Hermonthis. It was only in the Middle Kingdom, when two families came to the throne, both of whom were of Theban origin—they bore such names as *He of Amon*, and *Amon on the summit*—that attention was turned to Amon. It is true that he was not the god of the royal city, for that was situated in Middle Egypt in the vicinity of the Fayum, but an immense temple was built for him. Amon became an important provincial god, and so did his consort Mut, who was also called Amaunet, a feminine form of the name Amon. She came to the fore with her husband, and, as we have already remarked, was also merged in a compound form, with Bast and Sekhmet. But the great period for the Theban deities dawned with the beginning of the New Empire.

During the confusion which followed the twelfth dynasty, and during the foreign rule of the Hyksos, Thebes was the residence of a princely family, who worshipped Amon-Re, as he was

henceforth called. It was this family that succeeded in driving out the Hyksos, and as they acquired possession of the whole of the country, and made Thebes their royal residence, it naturally followed that *Amon-Re, the king of the gods,* should forthwith become the official god of the kingdom. Fate also decreed that these kings who had raised Amon-Re to such prominence should also allot him a degree of power which had hitherto been quite unexampled in Egypt. From the Euphrates far away to the Soudan, all countries paid tribute to the Pharaoh, and over the whole of this immense territory the fame of the god was spread abroad. With some of the wealth which flowed into Egypt, these Pharaohs and their descendants also built the colossal temples of Thebes, as thankofferings for the victories to which he had led them, and in other towns of their dominion they built sanctuaries to him, so that in every place the god of the ruling house might be worshipped. Thus for a long time he was the supreme deity, although originally he was merely an artificial conception, and possessed little individuality which was not borrowed from other gods.

There is a hymn of the New Kingdom in which this god, *with many names without number,*[1] is adored, and in reading it, one cannot fail to notice that, setting aside his name, and the mention of Karnak, there is not much else which directly refers to Amon. What there is consists only of various plays on his name, as *Chief of mankind, whose name is secret* (*amon*) *from his children,* and a mention of his *lofty plumes.*[2] What is actually said of him belongs peculiarly to two other deities whose names are connected with him—Min and Re. When it is said of him that *the gods love his savour when he comes forth from Punt* (the land of incense) and that *he is rich in sweet scents when he returns from the land of the Matoi,* or when he is called *the Horus of the East for whom the desert provides gold and silver, and lapis lazuli at his desire, all manner of incense in the land of the Matoi, and fresh myrrh for his nostrils,* these are all things which are said in extolling his neighbour, Min of Koptos, the

[1] Hymn to Amon, Cairo, 9, 3.

[2] All that follows where not otherwise noted is taken from the hymn to Amon at Cairo.

guardian of travellers in the desert. It is true that Min and Amon, as we have already (page 19) seen, were probably of identical origin, but the character of protector of the desert, borne by Min, can never have been shared with Amon, as his town of Thebes did not lie on the great desert road.

Yet more incompatible appears the combination with Re. The god is referred to as Re, Chepre, or Atum; he is *the bull of Heliopolis;* or *the resplendent one in the house of Benben* (page 27); he *traverses the heavens in peace* and is *lord of the evening- and morning-bark* (page 11). He also wars with Apophis, and as with Re, so it is *his eye that overthrows his enemies, his warriors shout when they see that the enemy is overthrown, that his limbs are flayed with the knife, that the fire has consumed him, and that his soul will be even more flayed than his body. These serpents, their coming will be resisted. The gods shout, the troops of Re are content: the enemies of Atum are overthrown, Karnak is content, Heliopolis triumphs.* Amon-Re also adopts the mythological *rôle* of the sun god and he is praised that he *has judged between Horus and Set in the great hall, as chief of the great ennead of the gods.* In the character of the sun god he appears like him as creator, preserver, and supporter of all living things; *he who hath made all, the sole one, with many hands. He commanded and the gods came into being,* he is the *father of the gods,* he *who made mankind and created the beasts. Mankind issued from his eye and the gods from his mouth* (see pp. 26, 28), *he it is who makes pasture for the herds and fruit trees for men; who creates that whereby fish live in the river and the birds under the heavens; who gives breath to those who are in the egg and feeds the son of the serpent, he creates that whereby the gnat lives and also the worms and fleas. He creates what is needed by the mice in their holes, and that which feeds the birds upon all trees. The Nile comes on his account, he, the sweet, the well-beloved, and when he comes, mankind lives.* And this *Lord of all gods* is verily of *kindly heart, when men call to him he delivers the fearful from the insolent.* Therefore is he loved and revered by all things *high as is the heavens, broad as is the earth, deep as is the sea. The gods bow themselves before thy majesty and extol their creator, they exult when they approach him who begat them;*

"Glory to thee," says every wild creature. "Praise to thee," says every desert. Thy beauty captivates the hearts. The love of thee enfeebles the arms, and thy beautiful countenance (?) causeth the hands to sink; the sight of thee causes the heart to forget.

And in this character of the all-beneficent sun god, *the living lamp, which rises from out the ocean of heaven,*[1] Amon attained real popularity. The officials prayed to him for promotion,[2] the oppressed trusted in him, for he is *the vizier of the poor, who takes no bribes,* and who also does not corrupt the witnesses.[3] Any cautious person making a promise added these words: *If Amon permits me to live.*[4]



Fig. 46. TABLET, DEDICATED BY A MAN NAMED NEB-MEHIT, TO AMON-RE, FOR HEARING A PETITION. (Berlin, 7354.)

Nevertheless the sun god, from whom Amon has borrowed all this, does not disappear from the sight of his people. Now, as before, he is mentioned without hesitation in conjunction with Amon, as a separate god, and they are represented side by side. In the prayer with which letters are commenced, the person addressed is always committed in the first place to Re Har-akhte, and only secondarily to Amon; also his name was employed to swear by, and finally, in the myths, Re Har-akhte remains, as formerly, the ruler of the world and of men.

[1] Paheri, 9, 1. [2] An. 4, 10, 5. [3] Bol. 1092, 2, 3. [4] Turin, 16, 3.

It was only natural that the other gods of Egypt should be somewhat thrown into the shade during this period of the supremacy of Amon-Re both in the State and among the people, even if their cults were still observed to some considerable extent. It was inevitable that the priests and worshippers of the ancient gods should resent this. Had not Ptah of Memphis and Atum of Heliopolis previously been the supreme gods, when nothing was known of Amon, god of that obscure town of Thebes? Was it right that all these other gods should be overshadowed? It was a matter of course that such jealousies should arise, and had it not been for the existence of a strong party antagonistic to the god, the great upheaval which we must now consider, and by which the power of Re was overthrown, at least for a time, could only have been carried out with greatest difficulty. This upheaval is the so-called religious reform of Amenophis IV., the most remarkable episode we meet with in the history of ancient Egypt. Unfortunately our information with regard to this period is of the slightest; it consists only of what we can gather and recover from the inscriptions, and of these the revengeful jealousy of the priests took care that little should survive for the future. Nevertheless we may, without excessive rashness, seek the cause of these events in the extraordinary conditions which prevailed at that time in Egypt.

The war against Syria was followed in the fifteenth century by an undisturbed period in which Egypt exercised her immense power and acquired a position in the civilized world of that time to which she had never before attained. All this would necessarily produce an impression on the people, and in a short time a greater change occurred in feeling and ideas than centuries had hitherto produced. The horizon of the nation had widened, and there began a breaking up of the old rigid and narrow-minded Egypt. Canaan and Syria now belonged to the great empire, their princes lived at the Egyptian court, and since commerce and communication had rendered the Egyptians familiar with their foreign ideas and language, it was no longer possible for them to be contemned as *vile barbarians.* The position of the kings also was radically altered; the Pharaoh could no longer be exclusively the *lord of the two Egypts,* the

follower of Horus; he became a human king like his neighbours, the kings of Mitani and Babylonia. This appears forcibly in the case of Amenophis III., whose long and peaceful reign was followed by the great upheaval. Although, as tradition compelled, he is still represented in the temple as a demi-god, on the great scarabs which he caused to be made to celebrate remarkable events of his reign, he permits the entirely human side of his career to appear.

As though he were no Egyptian king he tells us how he slew 110 lions, that he chased a herd of wild oxen, and that a daughter of the king of Mitani was sent to him accompanied by 317 maidens. But above all, he informs the world that he, the all mighty king, has wedded Tyi, daughter of Yua and Tua, the favoured child of private people, and has made her his queen. When we read this, and reflect how little such statements are in accordance with the Egyptian sentiment of royalty, we cannot doubt that the king who chose to appear thus, must have gone far towards deserting his national position. Egypt then began, as we should now express it, to become a modern State, and it was under these circumstances that Amenophis IV. ascended the throne, and soon engaged in the conflict which was destined for a time to divert all modes of thought into other directions.

Was this his own undertaking, or did he merely carry out a scheme commenced by his father? At any rate, he succeeded in

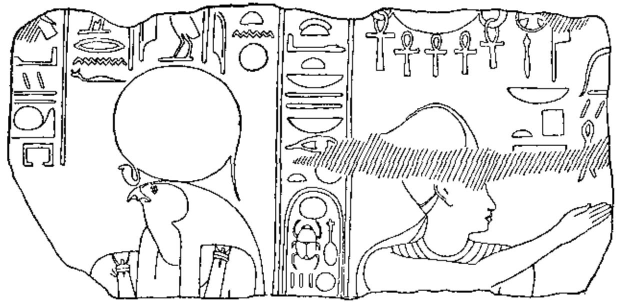


FIG. 47. FROM A BUILDING OF AMENOPHIS IV. AT THEBES.
To the right is the king praying, the sun above him: to the left the sun god in his ancient form, but already with his new name. (Berlin, 2072.)

diverging from the paths hitherto followed. His first attempt

was to reinstate the ancient sun god Re Har-akhte, who, as we have seen, had been superseded by Amon, as supreme god of the State. To this end he built new temples to him at Thebes, Memphis, Heliopolis, and other cities. By doing this he no doubt complied with the wishes of the priests of the ancient gods; but that he himself had further views in doing so, is shown by his representing the sun god under a new form, and also introducing a new name. Instead of the old hawk-headed figure of the god, a new one now appeared, consisting of the disc of the sun itself; from this descended rays, ending in hands which held the sign of life. At times the uræus serpent is hanging from its lower edge, an allegorical addition, which recalls an Egyptian conception. It was a mode of representing the god which could be understood by Syrians and Nubians alike, and we may well question whether such a reason did not lie behind its invention. For a great empire of the old world a universal form of religion would prove a powerful bond of union, and if it was desired to invent such a god, it was far easier to introduce a colourless universal sun god, than one which was purely Egyptian, as was the case with Amon. If, however, we study the new name of the god, *Har-akhte who triumphs on the horizon in his name "splendour, who is in the disc of the sun,"* we shall see in it the co-operation of learned speculation. No simple-minded worshipper of Re Har-akhte would thus have designated his god. It is a subtle title, which undoubtedly should be interpreted in its abstract meaning, that it was not the actual planet that was worshipped, but the being who manifests himself therein. As later on we find the king describing himself as *the teacher* of this new faith, we may perhaps ascribe to him personally this theological conception. Also when we observe among the circle surrounding the king in later years, the Queen Mother Tyi, and his favourite the subordinate priest Ei, husband to the king's nurse, and take into account the peculiarly morbid countenance of the Pharaoh, we are tempted to construct from all this a history which more than once in the annals of the world has proved the end of a great royal house.

One thing is, however, clear, that the introduction of the new cult promptly met with opposition, and that this opposition

originated with the followers of Amon. For the king turned with embittered animosity against this god and determined to overthrow him. Nothing should remain in Egypt which could call to mind Amon or his wife Mut—not even their names. Wherever the word Amon appears in a temple, in a tomb, or upon some object it must be erased, even though the monuments of the king's ancestors were greatly damaged in so doing. As his own name *Amenhotp* (Amon is content) by a most unfortunate coincidence contained this hated word, the king discarded it, and called himself instead Ikh-en-aton, "glory of the sun's disc."

The fanaticism which is here apparent carried him farther in his religious work and led to consequences which he cannot have originally intended. His sun god, who had been refused a position by the side of Amon, must now take his place, and in future he must be represented only as the sun with far-reaching rays. The ancient name Har-akhte must alone be retained in the official titulary of the god, his ordinary name must be *Aton*, the sun's disc, a word which in sound and appearance might appear adapted to take the place of the wonted *Amon-Re*. Not only was the new sun god to be the supreme deity, but he must be the sole one. Let those who will believe in Ptah and Hathor, Osiris and Isis, but for the loyal subjects of the king there must henceforth be only the one god whom he worshipped. And as an oriental king is not accustomed to lack "loyal followers," it is easy to understand that for ten or twenty years the new faith actually prevailed, at least among the upper classes of the people. The form taken by this new belief we can infer from a long hymn, which beyond any doubt obtained official standing in the cult. It runs thus:

Thou appearest resplendent on the horizon of the heavens, thou living sun, who wast the first to live. Thou arisest on the eastern horizon, and fillest the earth with thy beauty. Thou art beautiful and great, radiant, high above the earth. Thy beams encompass the lands, all that thou hast created. Thou art Re . . . thou subduest them with thy love. Thou art far off, yet thy beams are upon the earth. . . .

When thou settest on the western horizon, the earth is in darkness, as though it were dead. They sleep in their chambers with covered heads. Their nostrils are closed, and no eye sees its fellow. If their goods are stolen as they lie under their heads, they do not observe it. Every lion issues from his den, all reptiles bite . . . the earth is silent: he who made it resteth on his horizon.

Early in the morning thou arisest on the horizon, and shinest as the sun by day. Darkness flies when thou dost shed thy rays. The inhabitants of Egypt are joyous: they awake and stand upon their feet when thou hast raised thyself. They wash their bodies and lay hold on their garments. They raise their hands and extol thee. The whole land sets to its work.

All the flocks are content in their pastures. The trees and herbs become green, the birds flutter in their nests, and lift their wings to praise thee. All creatures leap upon their feet: all that flutter and fly, live when thou arisest for them.

Ships sail down stream, and likewise up stream; every way openeth when thou arisest. The fish in the river leap up before thy face; thy rays penetrate to the depths of the waters.

Thou who dost form boys within the women, and their seed in men; thou causest the son to live in the womb of his mother; thou who dost quiet him that he cry not, thou nurse within the womb.

Thou who dost give breath to provide life for all his functions, when he comes forth from the womb . . . on the day of his birth, thou openest his mouth and he speaks; thou providest whatever he needs.

The chick in the egg chirps within the shell . . . thou givest it air therein, that it may live . . . it comes forth from the egg to chirp . . . it goes forth on its feet when it comes forth.

How much is it, that thou hast done! . . . Thou createst the earth after thy will, thou alone, with mankind, herds and all beasts, everything that is on earth, that which goes on foot, and that which soars and flies with wings.

The foreign lands of Syria and Ethiopia and the land of Egypt, each one thou hast set in his place, and dost create what they need. Each one has his possessions, and the length of his life is reckoned; their tongues are distinct in their speech, and their

outward appearance is in conformity with their colour. Oh discriminator, thou dost discriminate between the nations.

Thou formest the Nile in the depths, and leadest it forth according to thy pleasure that it may provide for mankind. . . .

All distant lands whose maintenance thou dost provide, and didst set a Nile in the heavens, that it might descend to them; it casts waves upon the hills like the sea, and waters their pastures in their towns. How excellent are thy decrees, thou Lord of Eternity!

The Nile in the heavens, thou dost cause it to rain down for foreign nations, and for all wild beasts of the desert which go on foot, and the Nile which comes forth from the depths for Egypt. . .

Thou makest the seasons to sustain all that thou hast created, the winter to cool them, the heat, in which they taste of thee (?). Thou formest the distant heavens that thou mayest shine on them, that thou mayest see all that thou hast made, alone, and arising in thy countenance as the living sun, blazing, shining, withdrawing, and returning again.

Thou formest (the earth) for thyself, which came into being from thee alone, the cities, villages, tribes, roads and streams. All eyes behold thee before them, when thou art the sun of day over the earth.

A comparison of this magnificent hymn with the hymns to the ancient sun god, or with those quoted above to Amon-Re, will show the fundamental differences between them. They all alike adore the god as creator and protector of the world and of all living things. But the later hymn knows nothing of the ancient name of the sun god, of his crowns, sceptres, and sacred cities. It knows nothing of his barks and crew, nor of the dragon Apophis. Nothing of the journey through the realms of the dead, and the joy of those dwelling there. It is a song which might equally well be uttered by a Syrian or by an Ethiopian in praise of the sun. In fact, the manner in which these lands and their inhabitants are referred to in the hymn suggest that it was intended to put an end to the contempt with which the Egyptians had looked down on the *vile barbarians.* All men are children of the god; he has given them different complexions and different languages, and has set them in different countries, but he cares for all alike, and if to one he gives his Nile, to another he gives his rain.

This new faith resembles our own so closely, that we feel our sympathies unconsciously drawn to its courageous founder. And yet if we consider dispassionately what Amenophis IV. actually attempted, we shall eventually realize that justice and common-sense are rather to be sought for on the side of his opponents, however distasteful the cause they represent may be to us.

For the time had not yet come for such a religion as that of Akhenaton, which was not national, but based on a universal human standpoint. And again, it was a cruel injustice to overthrow the established historical belief of the people, with which their whole life was interwoven, and to force upon them a doctrine devised with such bold independence. Amenophis IV. was no reformer, he was an enlightened despot, who wished to establish by force the deism of his day in place of the hereditary religion; such an audacious attempt could only impede the healthy development of the new creed.

How the people accommodated themselves to the dogma of their king is shown in two small monuments now in the Berlin Museum. From the tombs all conceptions hitherto held must be banished; that the deceased should implore the sun to grant him the certainty of beholding him, and to give him the fresh breath of the north wind,[1] was quite correct, but of Osiris and his kingdom no more must be heard. Those who have read the fifth chapter, dealing with the funerary customs, and have seen how these numerous funerary customs were the growth of centuries, and the many hopes and fears connected with their observance, will realize what it would cost the Egyptians to renounce them. The consequence was that the people did not lose sight of them in the new religion, but in a spirit of contradiction they even introduced them into their new religious practices. There was no longer an Osiris nor a kingdom of the dead, but even now the great scarab, which was there efficacious (p. 142), was inscribed with a prayer to the Aton and laid near the mummy.[2] The pyramid that enabled the dead man to behold the sun (p. 143) is scarcely in accordance with the new religion, and yet it was found desirable to lay this also by the side of the deceased, only ensuring that the figure and name of the

[1] Lepsius *Denkmäler*, 107a. [2] Berlin, 15099.

Aton were on it.[1] Those figures intended to work for the dead (p. 141) in the realms of Osiris could not be dispensed with, even the grave of the monarch was provided with them, and on them also a most incongruous prayer to the Aton is inscribed.

The king himself could not escape the anomaly that his own position as demi-god and sole representative of mankind was a survival of the ancient religion. From this Amenophis IV. did not free himself. He remains *the son of the body of the god*, and at the close of every hymn of any length which recognizes the god as the father of mankind, he is introduced in these terms: *None other knows thee, except thy son the king.* We may take for granted that the king was also represented in the usual fashion as the sole *representative* of the god in the great temple he built to the god, although none of his reliefs have survived to our time.

This great sanctuary was not situated on any of the sites which had been consecrated places from early days, for all of these were closely associated with recollections not to be tolerated by the adherents of a faith that acknowledged a god beside whom there was no other. The king most wisely built a new capital for the new Egypt, the city whose ruins we now call Tell Amarna. In this great city created by him, Amenophis IV. lived for over ten years surrounded by his loyal subjects who had *hearkened to his teaching.* The brilliant life that was led there during that period is shown in the tombs near the city. On a critical examination we learn from them all that is most characteristic of the whole episode, so that we can here pass it in review. As in the religion the king desired to renounce all the dead traditions, so in art also he attempted to shake them off, and in both cases he found it necessary to dispose of the traditions of thousands of years by an entirely independent creation. Here also every man must see the world with his own eyes, and here also must every man rejoice in universal humanity and lay more stress on that than on national life. These scenes therefore show us the king and queen affectionately embracing one another, or drinking wine and eating fruit

[1] Berlin, 14123.

together, and rarely are the children of the king omitted, the young princesses; the eldest talking to her mother, the second amusing herself with the crown, and the youngest fondled in the arms of the king and kissed by him, as we see them on a relief in the Berlin collection. But prettily as all this is represented,



FIG. 48. AMENOPHIS IV. WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN. Over them is the new form of sun god. (Berlin, 14145.)

the new art, like the new religion, was on an unsound basis, and neither of them proved permanent.

At the death of the king, he was followed on the throne by various successors, who reigned only a short time, and who soon considered it incumbent on them to make their peace with Amon, and to remove once more to Thebes. With the prince Haremheb, who at one time was himself a follower of the Aton, a family succeeded to the throne which had done more than any other for Amon of Thebes. The triumph of the ancient religion was complete, and all the records and buildings of the heretics were now in their turn demolished. Proudly did the followers of Amon extol their god: *Woe to him who injures thee! Thy city*

endures, but the city of him who injures thee has perished. Shame upon him who commits sacrilege against thee in any land. . . . The sun of him who knew thee not has set; but he who knows thee, he shines; the sanctuary of him who injured thee lies in darkness, and the whole earth is in light.[1] It was in very truth darkness which descended upon the horrible *blasphemer of Tell Amarna*;[2] every memorial of him vanished, and it was only in modern times that Lepsius undertook to restore his name and his deeds once again to the light of day after more than three thousand years of oblivion.

So Amon-Re triumphed, and how magnificent was his triumph is shown by the immense temples erected to him during the next ten years, and by the wealth of which he had command; but closer examination shows that the great convulsion had not passed without leaving traces behind. The State made peace with Amon and restored him to his rights, but it also supported the ancient gods of the great towns, Ptah of Memphis, Re Har-akhte of Heliopolis, Osiris of Abydos, etc., far more zealously than it had done previously; never had a sovereign built or rebuilt so many temples as did Ramses II.; there is scarcely a temple in Egypt that did not receive proofs of his pious care, as if to counterbalance what he was doing for Amon in Karnak and Luxor. A political force was at work here. During the latter half of the New Kingdom, Lower Egypt increased greatly in importance, the royal residence was removed to a town in the Delta, and Upper Egypt once more sank into the subordinate position which naturally belonged to it. And thus in course of time the observance of the god of Thebes naturally declined.

In this second half of the New Kingdom, during the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties (about 1350–1100 B.C.) we find the Egyptian religion more magnificent and brilliant than it ever was before or after. Its gods were enthroned in those palatial temples which have no rivals in any other country or at any other period; temples that glistened with costly vessels, and where

[1] Inscriptions in the hierat. Char. pl. xxvi. (after comparison with the original).

[2] He is so called in a late text, Äg. Ztschr. 39. 16.

offerings and ceremonies were carried on in greatest magnificence. The property of the principal temples was immense. Under Ramses III. the temple of Amon at Thebes possessed 926 square miles of land and 81,322 serfs, as well as 421,362 head of cattle. Heliopolis had 166 square miles of land, 12,963 serfs, and 45,544 head of cattle; while the respective numbers for Memphis, which was far behind, were nearly 11 square miles, 3,079 serfs, and 10,047 cattle. Such property and such temples naturally could not be administered in the simple fashion of earlier days, although no doubt it still prevailed in the smaller temples. They required a complete administrative organization, where distinguished persons served as superintendents of the treasury, of the land, granaries, cattle, or peasantry, with scribes and soldiers, architects, sculptors, painters, and all classes of minor officials. The superior priests of such a temple had immense power in their hands, and the high-priests of Amon especially were men of almost royal rank.

The career of such a prince of the Church is described to us by one of them, Bekenkhons, a contemporary of Ramses II., on his statue at Munich. He was apparently successor of another Bekenkhons, who was high-priest of Amon under Amenophis III., and had already lived *as an infant in the house of Amon.* Although from the first he was destined for the office of a priest, up to his fifteenth year he received, in common with other youths of rank, a military training as *overseer of the stables* to the king. He then entered as *we'b* (p. 54) into the service of Amon, and remained four years in this lowest rank of priesthood. He had then to serve twelve years as *divine father*, fifteen years as *third priest,* and twelve years as second. He was thus in his fifty-ninth year when the god made him, *on account of his amazing excellence*, the high-priest of Amon, an office he was destined to fill for twenty-six years, as a good *father of the subordinates, who trained their successors, stretched out the hand to those in misery, who fed the poor, and acted nobly in his temple.* Also he was *first architect* for the king for Thebes, and in this capacity adorned it with buildings and obelisks; he planted it with trees and otherwise arranged for the lordly equipment of Karnak.

In such propitious circumstances, it is no subject for wonder that there should be an increasing tendency among the priests to form themselves into a separate class, distinct from the laity even in external appearance. However distinctive their vestments might be, the priests also avoided the ordinary clothing of the period. While the laity at this time clothed the upper part of the body, the priests merely wore the short skirt of the Old Kingdom, or the longer one of the Middle Kingdom, as though in this way they wished to show their connection with past ages. Neither did they adopt the elaborate hairdressing which was the fashion of the day, but shaved their heads completely, so that the office of temple barber was so sinecure. The reason for this must be sought, where the later Egyptians themselves found it, in the attempt to attain absolute cleanliness. Purity before all things was demanded of the priests; it is no empty phrase that we find at the entrance of the inner courts of the temples: *Let every one who enters here be pure.* At the ceremony of initiation of priests to the temple they actually bathed in the lake that was situated near the temple.

During the New Kingdom, one branch of religious work was retained in the hands of the laity, of the women. Almost every lady took her part in the temple ceremonies as *singer*, and performed with the sistrum *before the beautiful countenance* of the god. Such singing women existed in every town and every temple, but it is, of course, the singers of Amon whom we meet with most frequently, and who were united in a special organization.

As we have already seen (p. 39), the ceremonial attendance on a god, according to Egyptian ideas, in no way differed from the usual service paid to a man of rank in his own house. His servants provided his food and clothing, while the women who performed music before him may be regarded as the hareem, who cheered their lord with music. In Thebes this fiction was carried farther. Unlike other ladies, the wife of the high-priest was not called a *singer* of Amon, but bears the title of *his chief concubine.* The queen moreover, or one of the princesses, figures as the *wife of the god*, or as she is also called, *divine votaress.*

The duties of these divine wives consisted only of performing music before the god, but their position was one of the greatest dignity, and, what was more, ensured them a large income. As early as the beginning of the New Empire, they appear to have played at any rate a considerable part in politics. As we shall see, they became later actual rulers over an ecclesiastical principality.

While we regard with astonishment the immense development of this official religion in the New Kingdom, we shall feel more sympathy with the faith of the lower and upper classes of the people, which pursued its quiet way outside the temple, and of which we occasionally find traces. If we study the small stelæ dedicated to some god by private people, or the small figures of gods which stood in private houses, or read the inscriptions carved on rocks in the desert, we become acquainted with all manner of sacred beings who were not recognized by the great temples. Among these are foreign gods from Palestine, Phœnicia and Syria, brought to Egypt by soldiers or merchants, which figure chiefly as terrible deities, furious in warfare, or stirring up storms at sea. Among these is Baal the terrible, and Resheph, who carries lance and shield, Astarte, who drives a war chariot, Kedesh who stands on a lion, Anat, and that Astarte who as a goddess of war is seated on a horse. There is Sutekh, a god who perhaps originally arose from the



FIG. 49. ASTARTE ON HORSEBACK.
Inscription in the desert near Redesia, dedicated by an officer.

Egyptian god Set, but who was introduced by the Hyksos as a foreigner into the country, and who now appears as another name of the god Baal. In the eastern Delta, where the Hyksos had their principal city, his was actually an official cult, and the kings of the nineteenth dynasty, who very possibly came from this neighbourhood, mentioned him with Amon, Re, Ptah, among the great gods after whom they named their armies, and to whom they dedicated their new capital city Ramses. Baal, Astarte and Anat, moreover, were often introduced as similes in the poetry of royal inscriptions: Astarte appears in the myths,[1] and eventually in a late form of the tradition of Horus of Edfu, she appears as his wife. Baal continued to be venerated at Memphis long after the time of the New Empire.



FIG. 50. SUTEKH: the small horns, the appendage hanging from the crown, and also the bands on the skirt characterize him as a foreign deity. (Berlin, 8440.)

In addition to these gods who were introduced into Egypt from abroad, we meet at this time with others, who arose in Egypt itself, and who obtained a great following, principally among the lower classes. The appearance of these popular deities is a manifestation which cannot be passed over without notice. Thousands of years had passed since the old days, when the Egyptian built a primitive temple to his local god, and with his family sought to propitiate him by means of various gifts, in order to secure him help and protection. But this god, with whom every citizen was familiar, eventually became *the great god* who granted victory and power to the king, and whom the king and his nobles worshipped before every other god. His simple temple was enlarged into a magnificent sanctuary, his feasts were celebrated as State affairs with the greatest splendour, and his offerings provided for out of the rich revenues of the king. He possessed villages and

[1] Amherst Papyri, pl. 19 *et seq.* See also Harris, *Magical Papyrus*, 6. 8.

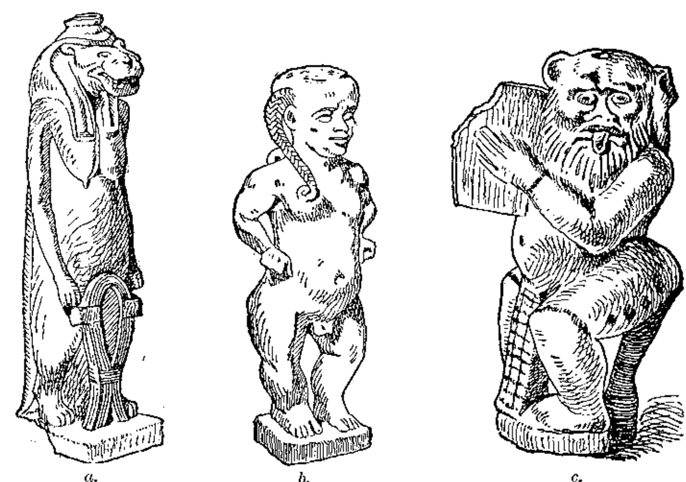
lands, slaves and cattle, his priests were personages of importance, his high-priest a prince. He attained to a very high degree of power and dignity. All this had entailed a loss on those to whom he had first owed his position, for the higher he rose in popular estimation, so much the more he became estranged from the hearts of the people. So great and lofty was he that the humble man could not venture to trouble him with the daily needs of body and soul; he was placed high above the people, like the king, to whom honour was accorded, as ruler and governor of all things, but who could not be confided in by the individual.

When religion developed in this direction, the necessity felt by mankind for a superhuman helper and friend led to the introduction of new deities. The great gods were too distant, but there were yet other sacred beings of lower rank, and it was perhaps more possible for them to share the cares of mankind. Among the names given by the people of Abydos to their children in the Middle Kingdom occur such as these, *gift of the Neshmet bark* or *of the Neshmet bark a son*, as though in gratitude to the bark of the Osiris temple for the birth of a child; the temple furniture, which was seen during the processions, was also venerated by the people of Abydos as their great god, whom all Egypt worshipped.[1] We find the same in the New Empire, when the Egyptians of the middle classes named their children by preference after the god Bes, and the goddess Thoueris, and placed the figures of these sacred beings in their houses, notwithstanding that this bandy-legged Bes, and this hippopotamus-shaped Thoueris, in the religion of the priests and of the temples were only known as inferior assistants of the great gods.

Bes is only one of a number of male and female demons, who may almost be compared to the satyrs of the Greeks. They are half animal and half human, whose duty is to amuse the gods with music and dancing or to tend the divine children. They are comic beings, and their figures were used as handles for mirrors, or as jars for cosmetics, but they also fight with knives and bows against adversaries or strangle serpents and

[1] From verbal information by Steindorff.

lions. And it is as a protection against such evil beings that Bes is particularly confided in. His wife is Thoueris, the



a. b. c.

FIG. 51. POPULAR DEITIES: (a) THOUERIS, (b) PATAIKOS, (c) BES, holding a lute. (Berlin, 10710, 11016, 5666.)

favourite of the people. Her name signifies merely *the great one.* She is a hippopotamus standing on her hind feet. She holds the hieroglyphic sign *protection,* and thus shows what was expected of her. We also find these marvellous beings as constellations.

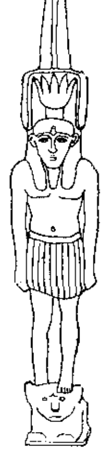


FIG. 52. NEFER-TEM. Hilton Price Collection.)

In the same way Onuris, "the support of the heavens," who is called the God Shu in many localities, is a protector against foes and evil spirits; in the eyes of the people he has become a god who bears human burdens, the "deliverer" (Shed) who drives as a prince in his war chariot, and slays wild animals. Nefer-tem is also of ancient origin, and appears as the son of Ptah and Sekhmet; he appears to have been originally regarded as a flower and he still wears a flower as his symbol on his head. Another son of Ptah, the wise Imhotep, who was in fact a learned man of early times, and who began to be regarded as the patron of scribes in the New Kingdom, we shall become better

acquainted with later on (p. 173). The strange deformed children whom, following Herodotus' example, we call Pataikoi, who

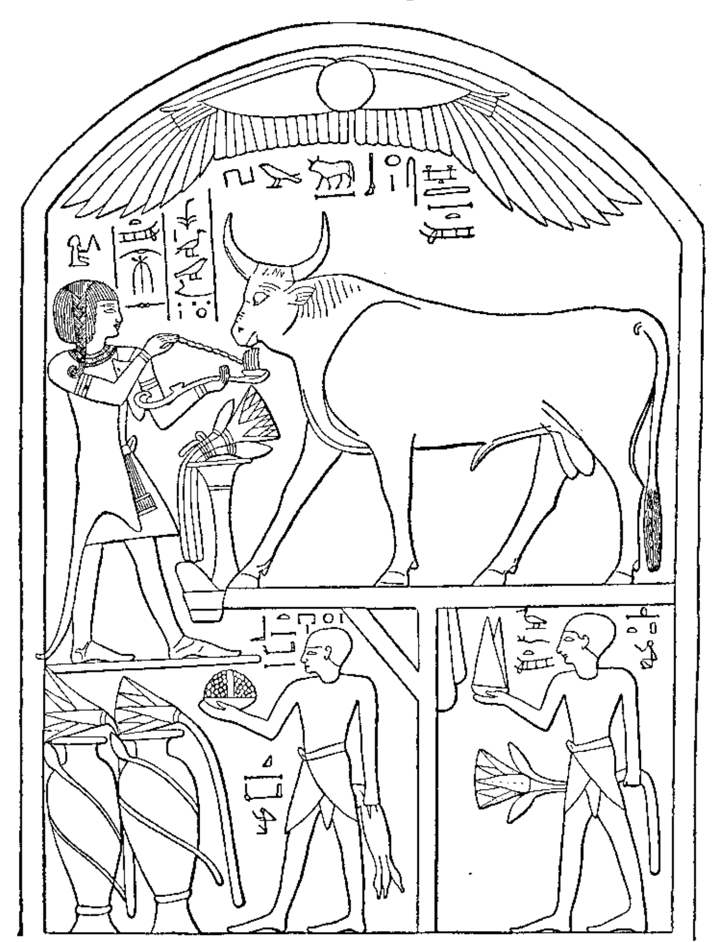


FIG. 53. TABLET DEDICATED TO MNEVIS BY KEN, who is represented in the lower part. Above, the high-priest Prince Amosis is offering incense. (Berlin, 14200.)

were regarded as sons of Ptah,[1] must also have been close friends of mankind.

The extent to which such sacred beings were also worshipped

[1] Thus Herodotus, III. 37.

in special localities must not be overlooked; they were everywhere. A letter from the city of Thebes [1] commends the person addressed not only to the great local gods, Amon, Mut and Khons, but also *to the great gates of Beki, the eight baboons which are in the fore-court* (undoubtedly statues of adoring baboons), as well as to two trees. On the west bank of Thebes, however, where the necropolis city of the royal residence was situated, which gave occupation to a large population of funerary priests, stonemasons, officials employed in the administration, and police, patron saints were found in the kings buried there in earlier times, and whose tomb rites were still observed. First of these Amenophis I. and his mother Queen Nefret-ere were regarded as specially gracious and helpful. Was it not their protection which saved one of these people, *who thrust his hand into a hole in which was a great serpent? Thus it is seen,* he says on the memorial stone which he dedicated in token of gratitude, *how powerful is Amenophis.*[2] There was also worshipped a special goddess of the necropolis, Merit-seger, *she who is beloved by him who maketh silent,* i.e. the friend of Osiris. She had her place on a mountain above the necropolis and therefore is herself called also *the western summit.* She was benevolent, but she was also addicted to warfare, as is shown on a stone tablet where Nefer-abu, a subordinate official of the necropolis, tells us, in an inscription of which the orthography is very incorrect,[3] *I was a man without knowledge, foolish, and knew not what is good and what evil. I committed sin against the mountain summit. She chastised me, and I was in her hand by night and by day, and I sat there . . . like those who are pregnant. I called out for air but it came not to me. . . . Behold, I say to great and small among the workmen: beware of the western summit, who is a lion in the summit. She strikes as a savage lion strikes, and pursues him who sins against her. But when I called to my mistress I found she came to me with sweet breath, and she was gracious unto me, when she had let me see her hand, and she turned peacefully to me. She caused me to forget my illness which had befallen me. Verily the western summit is*

[1] Bologna 1094, 10. 11 *et. seq.* [2] Turin 48.
[3] Maspero, *Etudes de Mythologie,* p. 404 *et. seq.,* here corrected from the original.

gracious, when one calls to her. Hearken, all ye ears upon earth; beware of the western summit. Would any Egyptian of the lower classes have ventured to attribute his punishment and his deliverance to Amon-Re of Karnak?

The importance now attached to these popular deities was shared by the sacred animals of the temples whom we have already (p. 22) mentioned. At Berlin there is a memorial tablet which represents a temple official of Heliopolis worshipping before the Mnevis bull, as early as the beginning of the New Kingdom. When the bull or the cat died, it was buried with a certain amount of display, and in a place that already enjoyed the odour of sanctity. We possess the coffin of one of the sacred cats dedicated to it by Amenophis III.[1] And for the tombs of the Apis bulls one of the sons of Ramses II., a high-priest of Ptah, made most careful provision. Reverence for these tombs was carried so far that the dead oxen were actually provided, as though they had been human beings, with funerary figures to work for them in the next world (p. 141).

Gladly would we know what the lower classes, who found satisfaction in these lesser divinities, actually thought of the universe and of the gods. Some insight into this will be afforded us by the stories of the New Kingdom, which, as in all cases, reflect the conceptions and ideas of the lower classes, although it may be the more educated people who have preserved them for us.[2] The principal god of the tradition is Re Har-akhte, while Amon is actually not named. Re is lord of the world, who aids the good people against the wicked. Accompanied by the *Ennead* of the gods he descends to earth like a king with his followers, to look after the just. Khnum is also present and creates mankind. At the birth of a child come the seven Hathor goddesses and discover what fate *his god* has allotted to him, and even though a man attempt to escape his destiny *the god verily does what he will.* That there should be marvellous trees, and bulls *of every beautiful colour*, and that it is well to bring offerings to them, does not appear surprising after the facts just quoted (p. 78). The idea of the appointed fate of man seems to have been widely

[1] At Cairo.

[2] The following is from d'Orbiney and Harris Papyri 500.

accepted. Thus, in an official document,[1] death is designated as *the destiny*, and there is also a deity of this name who indeed appears rather to bestow a happy fate.

While the people thus adjusted their own beliefs, the educated classes pondered over their gods, and over the universe, and while they thus analyzed and philosophized their religious beliefs became less fixed. More and more they minimized the differences between the individual ancient gods, and the more complicated became their religion. It was in the *house of life*, i. e. the school of the learned, that this wisdom was acquired, but that it also flourished outside the schools, among the educated classes, is shown by many songs of this period, which prove by their freshness that they were not composed in the house of life and which yet contain these ideas.

We must next hear what is told us by Ramses IV. on his memorial tablet at Abydos of what he had learnt in the course of his researches in the house of life among the books, *which he did not cease to esteem.* He found there *that thy nature, Osiris, is more secret* than that of all gods. *Thou art the moon which is in heaven. Thou rejuvenatest thyself at thy desire, thou becomest young according to thy wish. Thou appearest in order to dispel darkness, anointed and clothed* (i. e. in thy festival pomp), *for the gods and magic come into existence to illuminate thy majesty and to bring thy enemies to the shambles . . . And men reckon that they may know the month; and work addition, that they may know thy time.*

Verily thou art the Nile, great upon the banks at the time of the beginning of the season; man and gods live by the moisture which comes from thee.

I have also found thy majesty as king of the under-world . . . When Re rises every day and comes to the under-world, in order to survey this land and also the countries, thou sittest there also as he. Together ye shall be called Bai Demdem. The majesty of Thoth stands nigh unto you, in order to execute the commands which proceed from your mouth.[2]

It will be seen that the character of god of the dead, that under

[1] In the treaty of peace, Ramses II.
[2] Mariette, *Abydos*, ii. 54–55.

which Osiris was known and venerated by every Egyptian, here takes the third place, and even then only in an unusual form. In its place the parts usually played by the moon and the Nile are attributed to Osiris. And a song which gives utterance to similar ideas, places Osiris almost on the earth; it represents Osiris lying as a corpse under the earth, and, as it were, supporting it, with all that is on it; thus his back can be regarded as the earth itself. *The earth lies upon thine arm, and its corners upon thee even unto the four pillars of heaven. Dost thou stir thyself, the earth trembles, . . . and (the Nile) comes forth from the sweat of thy hands. Thou providest the breath out of thy throat for the nostrils of mankind. Everything whereby man lives, trees and herbs, barley and wheat,* is of divine origin, and comes from thee.—*Are canals dug . . . are houses and temples built, are monuments dragged into place, are fields laid out, are rock-tombs and graves hewn out—they rest on thee, thou it is who makest them. They are upon thy back. Yet more there is of thee than can be written, there is no empty space on thy back, they all lie on thy back and (thou sayest) not: I am laden.—Thou art the father and mother of mankind, they live by thy breath, and they eat the flesh of thy body.*[1]

When this could be said in reference to one of the ancient gods, it may be guessed what was done with Amon-Re, who was at all times incomprehensible. He had a *soul in his right eye, the sun,* he had another *in his left eye, the moon:* he is Shu, the god of the air, *with the noble aspect in the four winds.* He is Osiris. It is he who can *invest* his body *with all forms as he wishes,* and the gods of the provinces are *his forms.*[2] In a document which was drawn up at Eshmunen, it is set forth how Amon made himself a position everywhere, in order that his names might be many.[3] His original position had been on the heights of Eshmunen, where he landed from the Desdes water, when he emerged out of the flood in a secret egg (p. 26). The goddess of heaven stood behind him as Amaunet (p. 57), and he seated himself on this cow and grasped her horns, and swam across the flood and

[1] Ä. Z. 38. 32.
[2] Brugsch. Grosse Oase, S. 15–16, out of the *Secret Book of Amon.*
[3] *ib.* 26.

landed wherever he pleased; and wherever he landed there he became the god of the locality. In Ehnas, where he first landed, he became the local god Harsaphes; in Mendes he is the ram which is worshipped there; in Sais he is the son of Neith, *i.e.* Sobk; he is the ram of Heliopolis; he is Nun, the primeval waters; he is the god Ptah Tenen of Memphis; he is Ptah, who is worshipped at Thebes; he is Min of Koptos; he is Mont of Thebes. The Nile, most ancient of the gods, is another form of him, and his is heaven, earth, the under-world, water, and air.

Where all the gods are so confused nothing really remains of the ancient Egyptian religion except the external form; the names and figures of the gods are still there, but what they represent are only varying aspects of the universe, and so far this teaching may actually be called pantheistic.

The same educated classes who held these ideas now made another departure from tradition. Hitherto whoever prayed to the gods, or sang hymns in their honour, had made exclusive use of the ancient traditional formulæ, which indeed contained few ideas, but which were hallowed by centuries of use. In the latter half of the New Kingdom this was changed, and the new ideas and feelings which pervaded Egyptian life at this period evoked a new type of religious poetry, that allowed free scope to individual feelings and sentiments. Another proof of its popular character is that it is no longer written in the sacred language of the earlier literature, but is expressed in the later colloquial language. The oldest and finest example of this poetry is the hymn of Amenophis IV. (p. 64); also the hymn to Amon-Re, which we have already quoted (p. 58), where the god is adored as creator and protector of all, and which was already composed in the new style. A comparison of such poems with one of the older compositions, for instance with the hymn to Osiris (p. 48), will show a very great change. In the one are lifeless references to a variety of traditions, in the other there is individual feeling, and the joy of observing the works and the goodness of God. Here the god is a good herdsman; *Amon, thou herdsman, who early drivest forth the cows, who leadest the needy to the pastures.* He is the

mast who defies the storm, he is the pilot who knows the shoals, *who is longed after by him who is on the water.*[1] Thoth also is the fruit tree, who feeds mankind, *this great dom-palm of sixty cubits on which is fruit; kernels are in the fruit, and water is in the kernels;* he is *sweet springs for the thirsty in the desert;* he it is *who brings water to distant places.*[2] There is a personal relationship of affection and confidence with the god: *Amon-Re, I love thee and enfold thee in my heart. . . . I do not follow anxiety in my heart, what Amon-Re saith, cometh to pass.*[3] Thus he unhesitatingly lays before him all the troubles of his heart: *Thou wilt save me from the mouth of men in the day when they speak lies.*[4] He who is slandered by some rival in order to obtain his office, prays to the sun god, or to Osiris, to aid him;[5] and again another pleads thus: *Amon, lend thine ear to one who stands alone in the court of justice, who is poor, and his opponent is mighty. The tribunal oppresseth him; "silver and gold for the scribe, and clothes for the attendants!" but he findeth that Amon changeth himself into the vizier, whereby the poor escape.*[6] It is also actually stated in this poetry that the god directly espouses the cause of the poor; when all are against him, then he remains his protector, the judge who receives no bribes, and does not influence the witnesses.[7]

In one of these songs[8] there is also observable (as we have already seen on the memorial tablet of Nefer-Abu) an acknowledgment of the sinfulness of mankind. The Egyptians of the early period cannot have been ignorant that we are all sinners, but before their gods they made no use of this knowledge; to them they always made assurances of their excellence. It is otherwise with the poet of the New Empire; he knows that he is *a guilty man* and prays to his god: *Chastise me not according to my many sins.* Also the books of instruction in wisdom—which from early times were popular in Egypt, and which hitherto had supplied little more than a

[1] Inscription in the hier. Char., pl. xxvi.
[2] Sallier Papyrus, I, 8, 2 *et seq.*
[3] Inscription in the hier. Char., 1, 1.
[4] *ib.*
[5] Ä. Z. 38. 19 *et seq.*
[6] An. 2, 8, 5 *et seq*
[7] Bologna, 1094. 2, 3 *et seq.*
[8] An. 2, 10, 1 *et seq.*

correct rule of behaviour, now took another form. Serve thy god and avoid what he abhors. Woe to him who utters untruths against him [1] or otherwise does something that he hates. If thou neglectest thy mother, so that *she accuses thee and lifts up her hands to God, her cry will be heard* and thou wilt be punished.[2] Make offerings to him, and keep his feasts.[3] But when thou worshippest him, do it quietly and without ostentation in *the sanctuary of God to whom clamour is abhorrent. Pray to him with a longing heart, in which all thy words are hidden, so will he grant thy request, and hear that which thou sayest, and accept thy offering.*[4] This assurance that God loves a silent prayer better than a loud one is found also in the hymn to Thoth already quoted, which compares him to a well in the desert: *thou sweet spring for the thirsty in the desert; it is closed for those who speak there, it is open for those who keep silence there. When the silent man cometh he findeth the spring.*[5] In silentio et spe shall man seek the aid of his god. It is the dawn of an inward religion with which we meet at the end of the New Empire. A new epoch of religious conception had been inaugurated by the educated people of that period, the same period whose later development produced the Psalms. In Egypt itself it came to an end before it attained to full development, and in the history of ancient Egypt it is thus only an episode. What were the causes that interrupted this development we do not know, for during the next century Egypt vanishes almost entirely from our view. When we see it once more, political misfortunes have broken its power; the Egyptians had become a decaying nation who lived only in their past.

[1] Max. d'Anii. 6. 12. [2] *ib.* 7. 3. [3] *ib.* 6, 12; 2, 3.
[4] *ib.* 3, 2. [5] Sallier Papyrus, 1, 8, 2 *et seq.*

CHAPTER IV

BELIEFS REGARDING THE DEAD, OF THE EARLY PERIOD AND OF THE NEW KINGDOM

If there was a point on which the Egyptians differed from every other nation it was in their excessive care for the dead. Other nations have erected buildings for the worship of the gods, or for practical purposes, which may vie with the colossal temples of Egypt, but such graves as the Great Pyramids, or the rock tombs of Thebes, exist nowhere else in the world.

This must also strike any one who observes in our museums the immense variety of objects that were laid in the graves for the use of the deceased in his future existence. The Egyptians would not have persisted in these strenuous efforts during three thousand years had they not possessed very special views as to the future destiny of the dead, views which we can comprehend to-day, thanks to their ancient literature which has come down to us in almost immeasurable abundance.

It is true that it is not literature in the exact meaning of the word, or only in the slightest degree. At best it consists only of short or long formulæ, which from the earliest times were recited at the graves. Of these formulæ there are two great collections, from which we gather most of our knowledge of the subject; the so-called Pyramid texts, and the so-called Book of the Dead. The Pyramid texts is the name given by us to the long inscriptions in certain pyramids of the end of the Old Kingdom, which supplied the deceased kings with something approaching a library of ancient writings bearing on their future destiny. The greater part of these are extremely ancient, and were formulated at the earliest stages of Egyptian civilization. By the Book of the Dead we mean another group of texts which from the time of the New Kingdom were constantly written on papyri. Among them there is much that is undoubtedly

extremely ancient, but many new ideas are added. It is therefore to the Pyramid texts that we must turn in the first instance to discover what it was that induced the Egyptians to bestow so much care on offerings to the dead.

The difference between the living and the non-living was from the earliest times regarded by the Egyptians to be this, that the former were imbued by a special active force, which they called the ka. Every mortal received this ka at birth, if Re commanded it, and as long as he possessed it, as long as he is *lord of a ka*, and *goes with his ka*, so long he is one of the living. The ka is seen by no one, but it was assumed that in appearance it was exactly the counterpart of the man. As early as the time when the sun god first came into existence, and formed the two primeval gods by spitting them out of his mouth (p. 26), *he laid his arms behind them*, and forthwith his ka went up over them and they lived.[1] This stretching out the arms must be specially connected with the investing with a ka, for from the earliest times two outstretched arms signified a ka. When the man died, his ka left him, but it was hoped that it would still concern itself with the body in which it had dwelt so long, and that at any rate it would occasionally re-animate it. And it was probably for the ka that the grave was so carefully attended and provided with food, that it might not hunger or thirst.

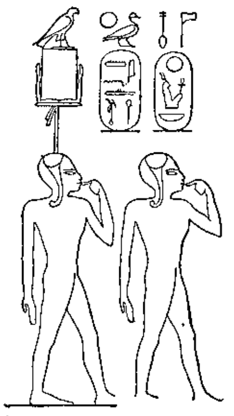


FIG. 54. AMENOPHIS III. AS A CHILD, AND HIS KA. (From the Temple of Luxor.)

In addition to this ka, which always remained a vague and undefined conception, notwithstanding the constant allusions to it, the Egyptians dreamed also of a soul, which might be seen under various forms. At death it left the body and flew away, thus it was naturally a bird, and it was only probable that when the mourners were lamenting their loss, the dead man himself might be close at hand, sitting among the birds on the trees

[1] Mariette, *Abydos*, Tableau xvi.

which he himself had planted. The thoughts of others turned to the lotus flowers which had blossomed on the pool during the night, and questioned whether the dead man might not be there; or again to the serpent which crept out of its hole so mysteriously as a *son of the earth,* or to the crocodile that crawled out of the river on to the bank, as though its true home were the land; who could tell whether the soul was not able to *assume* any of these *forms* and others also *that it desired,* and whether it did not abide here to-day and there to-morrow *in every place where it would.*[1]



FIG. 55. THE SOUL.
(*Hilton Price Collection.*)

Further thought, moreover, as to whether there might not be an abode for the dead similar to our world of the living, would raise the question where such an abode could be situated. Every evening the Egyptian saw the sun sink in the west, to reappear at dawn in the east; during the night it must therefore have traversed an under-world, a second subterranean heaven. It was only natural to claim this world, which was unapproachable for the living, as the abode of the dead. The sun sank in the west and sojourned there in a dark country which was only illuminated when he performed his nightly course and travelled through it. This conception early became popular, the realms of the dead were styled *the West,* and the dead were called *the dwellers in the west.*

It must be confessed that neither of these modes of life can be regarded as happy. Whether a man fulfilled his destiny under the earth, or appeared on earth in a variety of forms, it was in either case a melancholy existence, and no true life. It occurred, therefore, to some bold thinkers to doubt whether

[1] It is impossible to doubt the extreme antiquity of this popular belief, although we first meet with it in the Book of the Dead.

all alike must share this fate. Beside the many on earth who were poor and of small account, were there not some who were great and mighty, and might there not be the same distinction after death; there must surely exist better conditions and a better abode for the kings and other distinguished souls, for those who *should live according to the command of the gods,*[1] and this place was in heaven.

The Egyptian could watch the stars as they sailed at night in that untroubled splendour which is exhibited by the gorgeous sky of his country. Of these he knew several which shone with especial brilliancy, the dog star, Orion, the morning star, and thought these might assuredly be gods who, like the sun god, had left the earth. But what about the innumerable host of nameless stars that surrounded even the least of these? Doubtless they were the dead, happy souls, who had found their way to heaven, and who now wandered in eternal glory with the gods. *The great god the lord of heaven* (i.e. the sun god) had held out his hand to them, or the goddess of heaven had taken them to herself, and had ranged them among the *imperishable* stars of her body. Now, perhaps, does the deceased appear to us as *that single star which rises on the eastern side of the heavens,*[2] and which with Orion and Sothis, the dog star, traverses the sky.[3]

The imagination of the nation was actively engaged in giving definite form to this idea of the heavenly existence of the dead; how motley and contradictory was the picture thus formed will be shown in the following sketch, supplied by the earliest of the Pyramid texts.

Like a bird the dead flies up to heaven: *he goes to heaven like the hawks and his feathers are like those of the geese,*[4] *he rushes at heaven like a crane, he kisses heaven like the falcon, he leaps to heaven like the grasshopper.*[5] *Thus he flies away from you, ye men; he is no more upon earth, he is in heaven*[6] with *his brethren the gods*, where the goddess of heaven stretches out her hands to him. *He ascends to heaven, to thee, oh Re, with the head of a*

[1] Pyramid, 225 = P. 99.
[2] Pyr. 243 = P. 157.
[3] *ib.* 225 = P. 99.
[4] *ib.* 251 = P. 173.
[5] *ib.* 248 = M. 328.
[6] *ib.* 248 = P. 164.

falcon and wings of a goose . . . he moves his arms as a goose, and flaps his wings like a bird. He who flies, flies, oh ye men, and this one flies away from you.[1] In heaven, however, that goddess Nut *places him as an imperishable star which is upon her,*[2] *she it is who makes his life, she it is who gives birth to him. In the night he is begotten, in the night he is born ; he belongs to those who are behind Re, to those who are before the morning star.*[3] *He journeys to the east side of heaven, to the place where the gods are born, and where,*[4] *with them, he will be born, renewed, rejuvenated.*

He will undoubtedly meet various gods and stars, who might hinder him, but not one will be able to stop him; *there is no god who arrested him, there is no adversary who turned him back from his road.*[5] "*Whither goes he?*" asked a great bull, who threatened him with his horn. But the answer was given: "*He is going to heaven full of vigour, that he may see his father, that he may see Re,*" and the terrible creature lets him pass on.[6] The sun god takes a kindly interest in the new inhabitant of heaven: *I give thee*, he says, *thy speech and thy body, and thou receivest the form of a god;*[7] *he causes his body to become bright* like those of the heavenly ones;[8] he takes him as an oarsman in his own ship,[9] or assigns him a place *in the forepart, and the crew who row Re, they row him also.*[10] Or, he even makes him the commanding officer of his oarsmen,[11] yea, he displaces his own celestial scribe, and sets the deceased man *in his place,*[12] so that *he judges, and is arbitrator, and gives commands to one who is greater than he.*[13] Thus he journeys over the heavens as companion of the sun god, and *every god rejoices when he approaches.*[14] Thoth also, the moon god, takes an interest in the deceased in the same manner. By night he takes him in his bark, and thus *he traverses the heavens like Re, and traverses the heavens like Thoth.*[15] The exaggerated conceptions of the power of the illuminated dead in heaven, which find a place in many of the quotations already

[1] Pyr. 91 = W. 570 *et seq.*
[2] *ib.* 215 = P. 63.
[3] *ib.* 7 = W. 197 *et seq.*
[4] *ib.* 56 = P. 171.
[5] *ib.* 297 = P. 454.
[6] *ib.* 251 = P. 173.
[7] *ib.* 206 = P. 18.
[8] *Sonnenlitanei*, Mar.; *Ab.*, II. 14.
[9] *ib.* 248 = P. 163.
[10] Pyr. 193 = T. 340.
[11] *ib.* 252 = N. 948.
[12] *ib.* 257 = P. 186.
[13] *ib.* 193 = T. 342.
[14] *ib.* 252 = P. 175.
[15] *ib.* 6 = W. 195.

given, come even more prominently forward in others of these formulæ. The dead is called a god outright; he is Thoth, *the strongest of the gods,*[1] or he is *Weneg* (*i. e.* Shu), *the son of Re, who supports heaven, leads the earth, judges the gods.*[2] *Well is it with those who see him, crowned with the headdress of Re, with his apron on like Hathor.*[3] *He goes to heaven and finds Re standing there . . . he places himself by his side, and Re does not permit him to cast himself on the ground, for he knows that he is greater than he.*[4] He knows that this *imperishable illuminated one* is his son, and he sends out divine messengers to inform the inhabitants of heaven that a new ruler has appeared for them. *Set and Nephthys, hasten! proclaim to the southern gods and their illuminated ones: "He comes, an imperishable illuminated one! If he wishes that ye die, ye die; if he wishes that ye live, ye live."* Isis and Osiris must likewise betake themselves to the north, Thoth to the west, and Horus to the east. It is then said: *Oh Re Atum, thy son comes to thee, he comes to thee; thou permittest him to live with thee, thou foldest him in thine arms, him, the son of thy body eternally.*[5]

Full of alarm, the gods rouse themselves from their repose before *the great bird, which comes forth from the Nile, the jackal god which comes from out the tamarisks,*[6] for suddenly, like the bird that flutters up out of the water, and like the jackal who starts out of the bushes, so has the dead man appeared in their midst.

This exaggeration is carried to its farthest extent in the following text,[7] where a wild exuberant fancy depicts the deceased as a huntsman, who captures the stars of heaven, and devours the gods and the illuminated ones: *heaven rains, the stars fight, the bowmen wander about, and the bones of the Akeru*[8] *tremble . . . when they have seen how he ascends, and has a soul as a god who lives upon his fathers and feeds upon his mothers. . . . His splendour is in heaven, his power is in the*

[1] Pyr. 297 = P. 454.
[2] *ib.* 257 = P.185.
[3] *ib.* 124 = T. 42.
[4] *ib.* 222 = P. 90.
[5] *ib.* 13 = W. 222 *et seq.*
[6] *ib.* 6 = W. 187.
[7] *ib.* 63a = W. 496 *et seq.*
[8] The "bowmen," the Akeru, and all the other names which occur here, obviously refer to the constellations.

horizon, like that of Atum, his father who begat him; he begat him as one who is stronger than himself. . . . He it is who devours men and lives on gods. The Clasper of the Heads and the Emi-kehuu are they who capture them for him; he who is Splendid of Head guards them for him and drives them to him, the Heri-terut binds them for him, the runners with all knives stab them for him, and draw out their entrails, the Sheshmu cuts them up for him and cooks part of them in his evening cauldrons. He it is who devours their magic and swallows their illuminated ones. The great ones among them are his morning meal, the middle ones are his evening meal, and the small ones his night meal. The old men and women among them come into his oven. The great one in heaven casts fire on the cauldron, which contains the thighs of their eldest. The inhabitants of heaven are his property, and what he shoots are cauldrons with the limbs of their wives. This horrible fare is profitable to him, for he *consumes their full entrails and enjoys therewith satiety;* he devours their hearts and their crowns and thereby gains their powers, so that *their magic is in his body; he swallows the understanding of every god*—ideas that are found even now among cannibals.

Such extravagances are of course exceptional, and, frequently as it occurs, even the belief that the dead could accompany Re in his sun bark can scarcely be considered to have been the truly popular view. According to that the illuminated had a secure dwelling-place *on the east side* of *heaven upon its northern part among the imperishable ones,*[1] or with *the illuminated, the imperishable which are in the north of heaven*[2] or *in the east of heaven.*[3] Perhaps this referred to the position in the north-east of the circumpolar stars, which might truly be called the "imperishable," as, unlike the others, they never disappeared from the sky.[4]

This abode of the blessed the people further figured to themselves as a series of islands, surrounded on all sides by water; it is easy to imagine that the broad streak of the milky way, whose ramifications contain dark patches, led to this conception.

[1] Pyr. 262 = P. 203.
[2] *ib.* 292 = P. 435.
[3] *ib.* 251 = P. 174.
[4] Verbal information from Borchardt.

One of these islands was called the *Field of Food*, a name which indicates that there provisions were not lacking; on it reposed

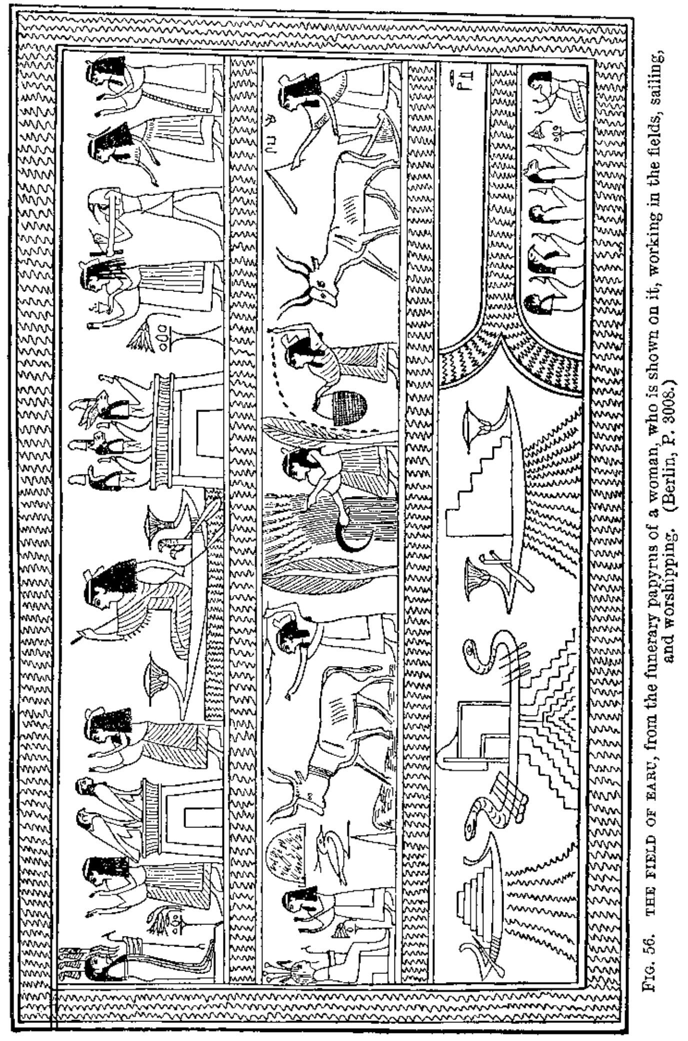


FIG. 56. THE FIELD OF EARU, from the funerary papyrus of a woman, who is shown on it, working in the fields, sailing, and worshipping. (Berlin, P. 3008.)

the gods and the imperishable ones. Even better known is the *Field of Earu*, whose name perhaps means field of bullrushes,[1]

[1] Verbal information from Sethe.

and which also was regarded by the later Egyptians as the country of the illuminated. That the Egyptian should consider these paradises to resemble his own land, needs no explanation ; they had water courses which, like the canals of the Nile, were *opened* at the times of inundation ; they were *filled* with water and *became verdant*,[1] in order to supply the deceased with sustenance. For without food even the gods and the illuminated ones of heaven cannot exist. In the east of heaven stands *that high sycamore upon which the gods sit*,[2] *the tree of life by which they live*,[3] whose fruits also feed the blessed. And the goddesses who are in heaven provide him with food which is even more innocent. If he comes to Nut, or to the serpent which guards the sun, either of them greets him as her son : *she has pity upon him, and offers him her breast that he may suck*, and thus he lives and is once more *a child*.[4] He comes to *each of his two mothers, the vultures with long hair and distended* (?) *breasts which sit on the hill of Sehseh; they place their breasts to his mouth and never do they wean him*.[5] But he also who cannot dispense with the habits of this world may hope for food, and for a more normal mode of life. *He receives his share of that which is in the granaries of the great god, he is clothed by the immortals*, and has bread and beer which continue eternally :[6] he *eats this his bread quite alone* and needs *no one who stands behind him* to give him thereof.[7] *His provision is among the gods, and his water is wine, like that of Re*.[8] *When Re eats, he gives to him, when Re drinks, he gives to him. He sleeps soundly every day . . . . he fares better to-day than yesterday*.[9] Thus fortunate is the *justified with their provided mouths*.[10] They do not require *hunger to eat and thirst to drink*,[11] and they need never fear that they will be forced to have recourse to their own filth, that fare which the Egyptian ever regarded with the utmost abhorrence.[12]

It was not accorded to all, however, *on the beautiful roads which are in heaven*,[13] to reach those fields of the blessed, for the

[1] Pyr. 292 = P. 416.
[2] *ib.* 251 = P. 174.
[3] *ib.* 292 = P. 431.
[4] *ib.* 251 = P. 173 and 281 = P. 286.
[5] ib. 281 = P. 303.
[6] *ib.* 288 = P. 395 ; 391.
[7] *ib.* 294 = P. 443.
[8] *ib.* 6 = W. 193.
[9] *ib.* 3 = W. 180.
[10] *ib.* 254 = P. 178.
[11] *ib.* 7 = W. 195.
[12] *ib.* 6 = W. 189.
[13] *ib.* 225 = P. 100.

waters that surrounded them were difficult to pass. Some would hope to be carried over by favour of the divine birds, the hawk of Horus and the ibis of Thoth: *Ye claws of Horus, ye wings of Thoth, carry him over, and do not leave him untransported.*[1] Others pray to four heavenly spirits, Hapi, Amset, Duamutef, and Kebehsenuf, the children of Horus, to bring them a ferry boat,[2] or they turn to the sun god himself, that he should carry them over in his bark.[3] Most, however, trust in a ferryman, who bears the names *He who looks behind* and *Turnface,* because he was forced to turn his head when he stood aft punting his boat. He ferried the gods over in his boat,[4] and would also render this service to the dead. Not to all of them, however, for this ferryman of the Field of Earu only ferried over *the just who hath no boat,* those who were found just before *heaven and earth,* and before the island itself.[5] This is a remarkable trace of ethical conceptions in this early time, and in these pyramid texts it does not stand entirely alone. If among the deceased there is one of whom it can be said, "*there is no evil which he hath done,*" the saying penetrates even to the sun god, and he receives him kindly;[6] the deceased also profits with regard to his reception in heaven, *if he has never spoken evil of the king* nor slighted the gods.[7]

As a rule, however, it is rather bodily cleanliness which the gods demand of their new companion in heaven, and they themselves aid him in this respect. The goddess who presides over the rapids of Elephantine *purifies him with four pitchers of water,*[8] *or he bathes together with Re in the lake of Earu: Horus dries his body, Thoth dries his feet.*[9] There is yet another conception of the life after death which must be added to those already mentioned; originally accessory to them, in course of time it dominated them all. This is the dogma of the dead god Osiris as king and prototype of all the dead.

We have already (p. 35) related the legend of this god, who died, but returned again to life. One of his chief abodes was at Abydos, which later on acquired great fame, as possessing the

[1] Pyr. 288 = P. 390. [2] *ib.* 295 = P. 444. [3] *ib.* 245 = P. 160.
[4] *ib.* 60 = W. 489. [5] *ib.* 290 = P. 400. [6] *ib.* 297 = P. 455.
[7] *ib.* 248 = P. 164. [8] *ib.* 281 = P. 297. [9] *ib.* 112 = P. 234.

head of the god as a relic, and it was very possibly here that the idea first arose of regarding the murdered god as ruler of the realms of the dead, *the first of those who are in the West*, according to one conception, the king of the illuminated according to another.

But this conception of him as king of the dead was not the essential one: that which decided the further development of Egyptian funerary beliefs was rather that the dead god was also looked on as a prototype of dead men. The man who was laid in the grave had actually met with the same fate as the god. Against his will he had bid farewell to life, and parted with wife and children; was it not therefore reasonable to hope that his further career also should resemble that of the god? *Even as Osiris lives, he also will live; even as Osiris is not dead, he also will not die; even as Osiris is not destroyed, he also will not be destroyed.*[1] Like a second Osiris he will awake to a new and joyous life. Like a second Horus his son will grow up, he will triumph over the enemy who injured his father in life, even as Horus triumphed over Set; he will guard his house and uphold the honour of his name.

But before all, the dead may now arise after the same fashion in which Osiris once rose again, not as a shadowy ghost, but in a physical resurrection, for were not the limbs of Osiris *collected together*[2] by the gods, *his head once more united to his*



FIG. 57. NUT, WITH WINGS OUTSTRETCHED OVER OSIRIS. (Berlin, 10832.)

bones, and his bones united to his head?[3] Therefore the same thing may happen to the human dead if he is treated as a new Osiris. His bones still lie there crumbling and motionless, but

[1] Pyr. 15 = W. 240 *et seq.* [2] *ib.* 153 = T. 272.
[3] *ib.* 144 = T. 158.

Nut, mother of Osiris, is already drawing near, to unite his bones once more: *she gives thee thy head, she brings thee thy bones, she sets thy limbs together, and places thy heart in thy body.*[1] All thy parts are once more with thy body: *thy illuminated spirit and thy power come to thee as to the god, the representative of Osiris: thy soul is within thee and thy power behind thee.*[2] *Thy ka* (p. 86) *will again accompany thee: thy life comes to thee . . . there comes to thee thy illuminated spirit, thou first of the illuminated; and thy strength, thou first of the living; thou hast a soul, thou man with a soul.*[3] Around thee stand the gods, and call to thee, "*rise, stand up,*"[4] and thou *awakest.* Keb opens thy mouth that thou canst speak again;[5] Thoth and Horus raise thee up and place thee in the midst of the gods.[6] Then *Horus causes Thoth to bring up thine enemy, and sets thee upon his back; seat thyself upon him, rise up and seat thyself on him,*[7] and the nine gods call out to the foe jeeringly as he lies under thee; *carry one who is greater than thou.*[8]

When thou has triumphed over thy persecutor, Re and Horus will provide a ladder for thee: *one of them will stand on this side, and another of them will stand on that side*[9] and *thou shalt mount upon it to heaven.*[10] *The gate of heaven will open to thee, and the great bolts will draw back for thee.*[11] *There thou findest Re stationed . . . he takes thee by the hand and leads thee into the sanctuary (?) of heaven, and sets thee upon the throne of Osiris,*[12] *upon this thy throne, in order that thou mayest rule the illuminated.*[13] There sittest thou now like Osiris, *with thy sceptre in thy hand, that thou mayest give commands to the living; with thy crook (?) and thy scourge in thy hand, that thou mayest give commands to those whose abodes are hidden.*[14] *The servants of the god stand behind thee and the nobles of the god stand before thee and cry: Come, thou god! come, thou god! come, thou possessor of the throne of Osiris! Isis speaks to thee and Nephthys greets thee. The illuminated come to thee and prostrate themselves, that*

[1] Pyr. 229 II. = P. 110.
[2] Pyr. 206 = P. 2.
[3] *ib.* 229 II. = P. 108.
[4] *ib.* 249 = P. 165.
[5] *ib.* 154 = T. 273.
[6] *ib.* 258 = P. 186.
[7] *ib.* 160 = T. 286.
[8] *ib.* 154 = T. 274.
[9] *ib.* 94 = W. 579.
[10] *ib.* 259 = P. 193.
[11] *ib.* 144 = T. 160.
[12] *ib.* 206 = P. 12.
[13] *ib.* 144 = T. 167.
[14] *ib.* 9 = W. 206.

they may kiss the ground at thy feet.[1] *Thou standest now protected and equipped as god, provided with the form of Osiris, on the throne of the first of those who are in the West. Thou dost as he did among the illuminated and the imperishable. Thy son, however, sits upon thy throne, provided with thy form. He does what thou didst use to do before, he the first of the living, according to the command of Re. He cultivates barley, he cultivates spelt and gives thee thereof.*[2] Thou however *causest thy house behind thee to prosper and guardest thy children from harm.*[3]

This is the destiny hoped for by the devout, who worship Osiris. They must of course leave the earth, but *they go not as dead, they go as living;*[4] in death they have not a mere spiritual ghostly existence, but they awake to a real renewed life, in full possession of their body and mind; *they possess their heart, they possess their mind, they possess their feet, they possess their mouth, they possess their arms, they possess all their limbs.*[5]

We cannot say when this belief first spread widely among the Egyptian people; in any case it existed at the primitive period, for even in the oldest form of funerary literature, in the pyramid texts, we find everywhere formulæ in which the dead are connected with Osiris. These examples taken from the pyramid texts are undoubtedly only adaptations of yet more ancient formulæ. So accustomed were the Egyptians to these utterances of the ancient dogmas, that they could not omit them from their newer beliefs. An ancient formula which was widely in use runs thus: *Happy those who see, and well for those who behold—say the gods—this god ascending to heaven . . . with his soul upon him, with his knife at his side, and the magic with him . . . thou ascendest to heaven, and dost meet him, etc.*[6] The later adaptation runs thus: *Happy he who sees the father—saith Isis—and well for him who beholds the father—saith Nephthys—to his father, to Osiris, when he ascends to heaven, among the stars, among the immortals, with the headcloth on the head, with the knife at the side, and the magic with him. He goes forth to his*

[1] Pyr. 206 = P. 6.
[2] *ib.* 206 = P. 18.
[3] *ib.* 229 I. = P. 106.
[4] *ib.* 9 = W. 206.
[5] Totenbuch, 68.
[6] Pyr. 95 = W. 584.

mother Nut and meets her, etc.[1] The first describes the journey of the dead to heaven, who enters heaven as a new god, to the amazement of the ancient gods (p. 90); the name of Osiris is introduced in the second, *heaven* is changed into his *mother Nut*, *the gods* have been altered to Isis and Nephthys, and thus a text descriptive of the journey of Osiris to heaven has been produced. We must confess that the change has not improved it either in meaning or in beauty.

Yet more barbarous is the use made of an ancient formula which extols the sky goddess who, by raising herself up, had snatched up the gods with her into the heights. A verse of this formula ran thus: *Nut, thou art crowned as king because thou didst take possession of the gods, their souls, their inheritance, their food, and all that they possess.*[2] This has been freely used as follows: *Osiris, thou art crowned as king of Upper and Lower Egypt, because thou didst take possession of the gods, and their souls.*[3] Although certainly the beneficent Osiris never carried off the gods from the earth. It is also noteworthy that in this variation the old word in Lower Egypt for a king has given place to the official Pharaonic title—a clear sign of the late origin of the compilation.

In other respects, again, the ancient funerary literature was not improved by the dissemination of the Osiris beliefs.

There had previously been no lack of conflicting ideas, and now the jumble was complete. Read for instance the following text, which affords a good instance of this confusion: *Awake for Horus and stand up against Set, raise thyself, thou eldest son of Keb. Thou, before whom the two Enneads tremble, for whom the chapels exist, for whom the periods of time are celebrated as festivals . . . Thou traversest Abydos in this thy illumination: of which the gods have commanded that it should be to thee, and thou ascendest to Duat, where Arion is. The heavenly bull seizes thy arm. Thou eatest the food of the gods. . . He (Re) places thee as the morning star in the midst of the Field of Earu. The gate of heaven to the horizon is open to thee, and the gods rejoice (?) when thou approachest as a star, which traverses the sea under the body of Nut in this thy*

[1] Pyr. 255 = P. 181.
[2] *ib.* 227 = P. 101.
[3] *ib.* 210 = P. 61.

majesty which Re hath commanded; thou sittest upon this thy throne of bronze as if thou wert the great one of Heliopolis, in order that thou mayest guide the illuminated and content the imperishable.[1] What a muddle it is! In the first sentence the dead man is Osiris himself, in the second he travels to Orion, in the third he is a star with Re, in the fourth he reigns as a king of the dead and of the stars.

This was only the beginning of the confusion. During the centuries that followed, the period when the greater number of texts of the so-called Book of the Dead originated, these ideas again assumed an entirely different form. We find all manner of later ideas concerning the fate of the dead and the realms of Osiris introduced and mixed up with them, while the earlier traditional conceptions had by this time become colourless, and their meaning misunderstood. Thus the ensuing confusion was so great that it now scarcely repays the labour of attempting to disentangle it. There is, moreover, one point which is very characteristic of the Book of the Dead; for the most part it was regarded entirely as a collection of magic formulæ. Should such and such an event happen to the deceased, he utters a spell, in which he identifies himself with such and such a god, in the belief that he will by this means become possessed of his attributes. He for instance who utters this spell: "*My name was given me in the great house, and the remembrance of my name in the house of flames, in that night when the years were counted and the months reckoned, I am that one therein who sits in the east of heaven, and every god who doth not follow me, that name I speak!" he will remember his name in the realms of the dead.*[2]

This fear lest in the hereafter the dead should no longer remember his own identity, was only one of many strange anxieties which this magic of the Book of the Dead was intended to relieve. He feared also lest he should have no mouth with which to speak to the gods,[3] and lest he should be robbed of his heart.[4] His head might be cut off.[5] Notwithstanding embalmment, his body might decay,[6] hostile beings

[1] Pyr. 220 III. = M. 698; 701 *et seq.*; 710 *et seq.*
[2] Totenbuch, 25. [3] *ib.* 22. [4] *ib.* 27.
[5] *ib.* 43. [6] *ib.* 45.

might desire to deprive him of *his place and throne* in the realms of the dead,[1] and he himself, like an unfortunate animal offered in sacrifice, might *come to the butcher's block of the gods.*[2] Food and drink might fail him, and he might be obliged to eat and drink his own filth.[3] If he really has water, it may happen to the water to burn when he is about to drink it.[4] Again, his supply of air may fail.[5] Against these and all similar perils, the spells of the Book of the Dead are intended to help. Against serpents, for instance, who can bite the dead, it is a safeguard to address them thus: *Oh serpent, come not! Geb and Shu stand against thee. Thou hast eaten mice; that is loathsome to Re; thou hast gnawed the bones of a putrid cat.*[6] And against the eating of excrement this chapter guards: *I am he who hath bread in Heliopolis. My bread is in heaven with Re, and my bread is upon earth with Keb. The evening- and morning-bark of the sun bring it to me from the house of the great god of Heliopolis.*[7] . . .

Truly fortunate were those who were provided with this magic, and also knew how to protect themselves by means of the spell which availed against the crocodile who would rob the dead man of his magic.[8] Even during life the knowledge of all these spells was of service: *Whoever readeth these spells daily over himself, he is whole upon earth; he escapes from every fire, and never doth anything evil meet him.*[9]

All these anxieties and all this magic scarcely appear in the Pyramid texts, with the exception of a series of spells against snakes. While the Book of the Dead differs so completely in this respect from the Pyramid texts, it shows thereby a popular element which in other respects is very characteristic of the later work. Here primitive conceptions once more appear that were almost lost sight of in the Pyramid texts, as they did not accord with the heavenly existence hoped for by these great lords. The dead man, or rather his soul, might *change himself into all things that the heart desireth,*[10] into a phœnix, a heron, a

[1] Totenbuch, 47.
[2] *ib.* 50.
[3] *ib.* 53.
[4] *ib.* 63 B.
[5] *ib.* 56.
[6] *ib.* 33.
[7] *ib.* 53.
[8] *ib.* 31.
[9] *ib.* 18, end.
[10] *ib.* 64.

swallow, a hawk, a worm, a crocodile, a lotus flower,[1] the soul would be able to unite itself once more with the body,[2] and to find the door of the tomb open,[3] nothing would prevent it from *being able to go out by day*, in that form which it chooses.[4] It is exactly this supreme desire of the dead man to dwell upon the earth in the day-time, when the sun is shining, which plays so great a part in the Book of the Dead, that later the whole book was known as *the Book of coming out by Day*.

But of far greater importance than all of these is a dogma of later origin, that of the necessary justification of the dead. We have already seen that the dead Osiris was challenged by Set, and that the gods assembled to judge him in the hall of Heliopolis, *and made him true of speech*, that is, found him guiltless; we learn from the Book of the Dead,[5] that similar judgment halls were established in Busiris, Buto, Abydos, Herakleopolis, in the Sokaris Temple at Memphis, and in other sacred places, and everywhere it was Thoth who *vindicated* him. This conception led to a desire that the dead, as representing the new Osiris, should also be vindicated by Thoth: as Osiris was found to be just, so the deceased desired to be found pure and sinless in the abodes of the dead—how should he otherwise find acceptance in the realms of that god, who himself owed his position as ruler to his sinlessness? It is a question of ethics, which in this Osiris myth thus makes its appearance in the Egyptian belief. From henceforth it is not the powerful and distinguished who will triumph after death, but the upright and sinless.

That this conception of Osiris as judge of the dead had already appeared in the Old Kingdom is shown by a tomb inscription that speaks of *the great god, the lord of justice*,[6] but it was only during the Middle Kingdom that it acquired definite form and general recognition. In the great chapter of the Book of the Dead we next find it pictured thus: In a large hall, whose roof is ringed round with flames of fire and symbols of truth, Osiris is enthroned in a chapel; before him is the symbol of Anubis

[1] Totenbuch, 77–89.
[2] *ib.* 89.
[3] *ib.* 92.
[4] *ib.* 18–64.
[5] *ib.* 18–20.
[6] Mariette, *Mastabas*, D. 19.

(p. 20), the four sons of Horus (p. 94), and the *devourer of the West*, a fabulous animal who serves as protector to the god. Above, *i. e.* farther back in the hall, sit the forty-two judges of the dead; below again, *i. e.* in front, is the great balance, in which the heart of the dead is to be weighed. The dead will be received by the goddess of truth on entering the hall;[1] Horus and Anubis then take his heart, and weigh it in the balance to prove whether it is lighter than truth. Thoth, the *scribe of the gods*, notes the result upon his tablets and communicates it to Osiris. More remarkable, however, than this representation is the speech required of the dead man,[2] when *he arrives at this hall of the two truths, when he is freed from all evil which he has done, and when he beholds the face of the*

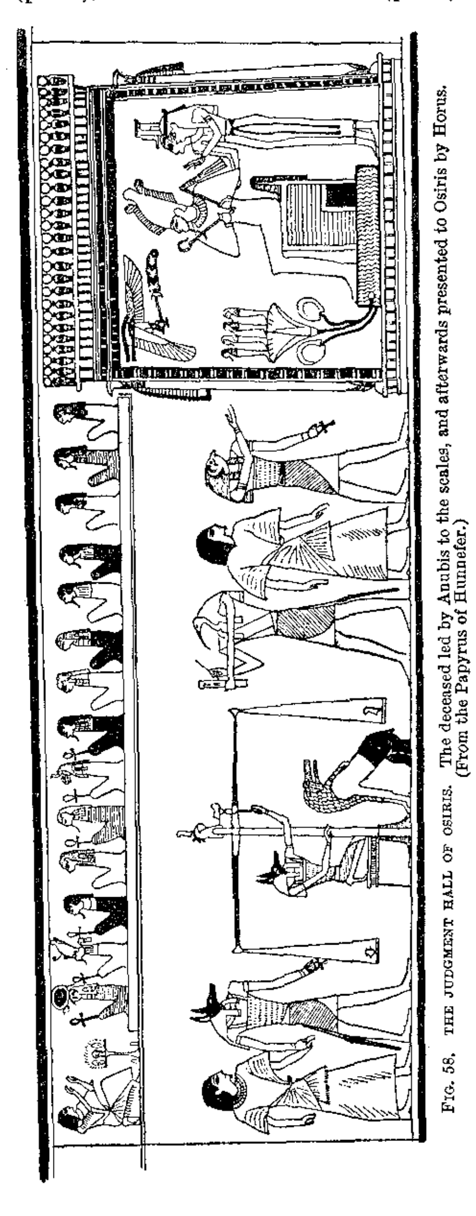


Fig. 58. THE JUDGMENT HALL OF OSIRIS. The deceased led by Anubis to the scales, and afterwards presented to Osiris by Horus. (From the Papyrus of Hunnefer.)

[1] Maat does not appear on the accompanying illustration. (Eng. trans.)

[2] Totenbuch, 125.

god. Thus runs his prayer: *Praise be to thee, thou great god, thou lord of the two truths. I have come to thee, oh my lord, that I may behold thy beauty. I know thee, and know the names of the forty-two gods who are with thee in the hall of the two truths, who live on the evil doers, and who drink their blood each day of the reckoning before Wennofre.*

I come to thee and bring to thee truth, and chase away wrong doing.

I have committed no sins against mankind . . . I have not done that which the gods abhor. I have made no man evil in the eyes of his superior. I have not caused to hunger. I have not caused to weep. I have done no murder. I have not commanded to murder. I have not occasioned grief to any. I have not diminished the food in the temples. I have not lessened the bread of the gods. I have not stolen the provisions of the illuminated. I have not committed impurity in the pure abodes of the god of my city. I have not diminished the corn measure. I have not diminished the cubit measure. I have not falsified the field measure. I have not added to the weights of the balance. I have not falsified the tongue of the balance. I have not stolen the milk from the mouth of the child. I have not stolen the cattle from his pasture. I have not snared the birds of the gods. I have not caught the fish in their lakes. I have not hindered the water (of the inundation) in its time. I have not dammed up running water . . . I have not injured the herds in the temple domains. I have not hindered the god in his revenues. A second confession of the same character then follows, in which a separate judge is appealed to for every sin. There is no doubt that originally it was entirely separate, and was afterwards introduced here, with the result that the dead man has twice to testify to his innocence: *Oh thou, wide of stride in Heliopolis, I have committed no sin. Oh Clasper of flames in Kher-Ahau! I have not stolen. Oh Nose in Hermopolis! I have not defrauded. Oh Devourer of Shadows in Kerert! I have not stolen. Oh Looker backward in Rosetta! I have not murdered men. Oh Double lioness in heaven! I have not diminished the measure of corn. Oh Knife-eyed in Letopolis! I have done nothing dishonest. Oh Flame in Khetkhet! I have*

not stolen the Temple property. Oh Bone-breaker in Herakleopolis! I have not lied. Among other sins which the dead man disowns before *White-teeth, Devourer of blood, Devourer of entrails, Wanderer*, and other similar terrible beings, are the following: *I have stolen no food. I have not slain sacred animals. I have not lain in wait. I have not committed adultery. I was not deaf to words of truth. I have not caused weeping. I have not consumed my heart (with remorse). I have not calumniated. I have not uttered many words. I have not reviled the king. My voice was not loud. I have not reviled the god*, etc. Then again the dead man addresses the terrible judges: *May ye be praised, ye gods. I know you and know your names. I shall not fall by your sword. This god in whose following ye are, reports to you nothing evil about me. You are not concerned with me, ye speak the truth concerning me before the lord of all. For I have done justly in Egypt, I have not reviled the god, and the king of the time had nothing against me.*

Praise to you, ye gods, ye who are in the hall of the two truths, in whose body is no lie, and who live in truth . . . before Horus who dwells in his sun. Deliver me from Bebon, who lives on the entrails of the great ones, in the day of the great reckoning. Behold, I come to you, without sin, without evil . . . I live by truth, and feed myself with the truth of my heart. I have done that which man commandeth and that wherewith the gods are content. I have pleased the god with that which he loveth. I have given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, and a passage over the river to him who hath no boat. I have made offerings to the god and funerary gifts to the illuminated.

Deliver me, protect me; Ye do not accuse me before the great god. I am one who hath a clean mouth and pure hands, one to whom those who see them cry, "Welcome, welcome."

Another great aid to the deceased in his search for justification, namely, that *he has heard that word which the ass spake with the cat*, etc., is considered a proof that he has been a faithful servant of Osiris, and has taken part in the feasts and ceremonies.

If we look through these lists of sins not committed, it is evident that the compiler found considerable difficulty in finding

forty-two sins to assign to each of the forty-two judges, whose number was fixed by the forty-two provinces; they reappear under different forms, or they are expressed quite generally. Those which are forbidden are somewhat as follows: Injury to the gods and the dead, murder, oppression, stealing, robbing minors, fraud, impurity and adultery, lying, slander, reviling, lying in wait (eavesdropping)—all of which are also condemned in our scheme of morality. There is only one which exceeds ours, the remarkable but fine command which forbids *heart eating*, i. e. useless remorse.

What is elsewhere stated in the tomb inscriptions of the earlier time as warrant of the worth of the deceased is of equally simple character: *I gave bread to the hungry and clothes to the naked, and gave a passage in my own boat to those who could not cross.*[1] *I was a father to the orphan, a husband to the widow, a protection from the wind to the shivering;*[2] *I am one who spake what was good and related what was good* (not a scandal monger). *I acquired my possessions in a just manner.*[3]

The dead who could not pass the test obtained no entrance into the kingdom of Osiris, and this was sufficiently sad for them, for now they must lie hungry and thirsty in their graves, and neither by day nor by night can they behold the sun. But as in the case of earthly tribunals, a special punishment is awarded to those who are not acquitted, so for the non-justified dead a punishment was devised, although it was certainly a later addition. The judges carried swords with which to chastise the guilty, and a peculiarly terrible being, Bebon, of whom we know nothing, was ready to tear him to pieces. But we do not learn much more than this; it was not a circumstance on which the imagination of the Egyptians loved to dwell.

Also with regard to the future of the blessed we do not learn much that is clear from the Book of the Dead. *He has his place in the Hall before the great god, and he knows every great god . . . He goes out into the Field of Earu. There is given to him cakes and bread, and fields of barley and spelt seven cubits high. The servants of Horus gather in his harvest, and he*

[1] Cairo, 20505, u.o. [2] Hanover, Kestner Museum, No. 11.
[3] Cairo, 1641.

eats of this barley and this spelt.[1] Or again: *He goes in and out in the under-world, and inhabits the Field of Earu and dwells in the Field of Food, the great place rich in breezes. He is mighty there, and is illuminated there, he ploughs there and harvests there, and drinks there, and enjoys the pleasure of love there, and does everything that he did on earth.*[2]

We will quote two tomb inscriptions which will show the conceptions that prevailed during the New Kingdom as to the existence of the blessed dead in connection with the Book of the Dead. In the first[3] Nachtmin, the superintendent of the granary, desires for himself *splendour in heaven, power upon earth and justification in the under-world—to go in and out of my grave—that I may cool myself in its shadow—that I may daily drink water out of my pool—that my limbs may grow—that the Nile may bring me nourishment and food and all green plants in its time—that I may exercise myself upon the borders of my pool, daily without ceasing—that my soul may hover on the boughs of the trees which I planted—that I may cool myself under my sycamores—that I may eat the fruit which they give—that I may have a mouth with which I may speak like the servants of Horus—that I may mount up to heaven, and descend to earth, and not be hindered on the way—that my ka may not be waylaid—that my soul may not be shut up—that I may be among the praised, in the midst of the noble ones—that I may plough my land in the Field of Earu—that I may arrive at the Field of Food, that they may come out to me with jars and loaves —with all food of the Lord of eternity—that I may receive my provisions from the flesh on the altar of the great god.*

For Paheri, prince of El Kab, the following wishes are expressed by his relatives: *Thou goest in and out with a glad heart, and with the rewards of the Lord of the gods . . . Thou becomest a living soul; thou hast power over bread, water and air. Thou changest thyself into a phœnix or a swallow, a sparrow-hawk or a heron, as thou desirest. Thou dost cross in the boat and art not hindered. Thou sailest upon the water when a flood ariseth. Thou livest anew and thy soul is not parted from thy body. Thy soul is a*

[1] Totenbuch, 99. [2] *ib.* 110, introduction.

[3] Louvre, C. 55.

god together with the illuminated, and the excellent souls speak with thee. Thou art among them and (verily) receivest what is given upon earth; thou possessest water, possessest air, hast superabundance of that which thou desirest. Thine eyes are given to thee to see, and thine ears to hear speech, thy mouth speaketh, thy legs move, thy hands and arms bestir themselves for thee, thy flesh grows, thy veins are in health, and thou feelest thyself well in all thy limbs. Thou hast thine upright heart in thy possession, and thy earlier heart belongs to thee. Thou dost mount up to heaven, and art summoned each day to the libation table of Wennofre, thou receivest the food which has been offered to him and the gifts of the Lords of the necropolis.

And there are further wishes expressed for the same individual. *Thou eatest bread in the presence of the god, on the great staircase of the Lord of the Ennead* (of Osiris in Abydos). *Thou dost exercise thyelf there and art friendly with the servants of Horus* (the ancient kings who reigned there). *Thou dost ascend and descend and art not prevented. Admittance is not refused thee at the gate of Duat, but the folding doors of the horizon are opened to thee, and the bolts open to thee of themselves. Thou treadest the hall of the Two Truths, and the god who is in it greets thee. Thou seatest thyself within the kingdom of the dead and walkest about in the "city of the Nile." Thou rejoicest when thou ploughest thy portion of the Field of Earu. What thou needest is produced by thy labour, and thy harvest comes to thee as corn. A rope is fixed to the boat for thee, that thou mayest sail when it pleaseth thee. Every morning thou goest out, and every evening thou returnest home. At night a lamp is lighted for thee, until the sun again shines on thy body. "Welcome" is said to thee in this thy house of the living. Thou beholdest Re in the horizon of heaven, and gazest on Amon when he ariseth. Thou awakest beautiful by day, all evil chased away from thee. Thou dost traverse eternity with joyfulness and with the praise of the god who is in thee* (i. e. thy conscience ?). *Thou possessest thy heart, it doth not depart from thee. Thy food is there where it should be.*

A careful reading of this passage scarcely affords us a clear comprehension of the life of the dead. That the dead passes the night in the tomb or in the under-world, that he awakes in the morning and leaves his grave, when he sees the sun arise;

that he sits like a bird on the trees or delights himself by intercourse with the ancient dead in Abydos; that he also dwells in heaven, where he reaches the Field of Earu by means of the boat; that he there tills the ground, but that he is also supplied with food by Osiris, that with all this he feels himself once more a living man, with renewed soul and body—this is about all that we can learn. But if we attempt to arrive at details we are rebuffed by all manner of contradictions. For instance, according to the Paheri inscription Dûat is situated in heaven, while, as we have seen, it was usually considered as being under the earth, and the judgment of the dead, in the inscription of Nachtmin, is placed in the under-world, while that of Paheri places the Hall of the Two Truths in which it was held, in heaven. Any one also who wishes clearly to understand the relation in which body, soul and ka stood to each other—many texts recognize the *shadow* of the man in addition to these—finds even greater confusion in the later texts than he encountered in the earlier ones, and may well wonder how an intelligent nation could allow itself for so many centuries to be encumbered with such a jumble.

But we are now dealing with supernatural matters, and these no nation can define with absolute exactitude. At first they were vivid conceptions, to which names were given by a youthful fresh imagination, but successive generations included new and unforeseen ideas under this fixed nomenclature. We ourselves speak of "heaven" and mean little more by the word than an abode of the blessed; we speak of the soul, of the spirit, of the heart with little comprehension of the original values of these expressions.

We must, therefore, concede to the Egyptians of historical times the right to extend the use of their ancient expressions for what is supernatural and intangible, regardles sof their strict meaning. Could we to-day question an Egyptian concerning these apparent contradictions, he would no doubt tell us that on the whole they scarcely contained a contradiction—or else that it is advisable not to investigate too closely into such sacred and inscrutable matters. They possess a certain attraction for mankind which lies in this very mystery and vagueness, and it is only a lifeless and learned theology that would conceive the idea of drawing up in Philistine

fashion a kind of geography of the Hereafter. That the Egyptian nation were not exempt from this is proved by the marvellous books, which pointed out to the deceased the road they should take, and explained to him all the various beings he would meet with in the under-world.

Whoever entered the realms of the dead by the sacred place of Ro-Setau (p. 15), had, as we learn from a map of the Hereafter,[1] two routes open to him, which would lead him to the land of the blessed, one by water, the other by land. Both are zigzag, and a traveller cannot change from one to the other, for between them lies a sea of fire. There are also by-ways, *by which thou must not travel*, for they lead thee into the fire, or they are by-paths. Also before entering upon either of these routes there is a gate of fire to be passed. This idea that gates are placed in the road taken by the dead is also found in the Book of the Dead.[2] The Field of Earu has fifteen or twenty-one gates, and evil gatekeepers stand by them with knives in their hands, and serpents also are stationed there.

The literature has developed strangely into two voluminous books, one of which indicates the route of the dead on their journey, while the other conveys the sun through the under-world during the twelve hours of the night. Here we find the old idea that even the unfortunate dead in their darkness shall be allowed once to behold the light, but how greatly is this beautiful conception weakened!

According to the Book of him *who is in the under-world*—usually called Amduat—the under-world is divided into twelve parts, which correspond to the twelve hours, and are spoken of as *fields* or *caverns*. They have a large population of gods, of spirits, and of the dead. In each there is usually a town, and each is ruled by a god. As the Pharaoh sailed through the provinces of his kingdom, so did the sun god sail from one cavern to another; *he issues his commands to the gods who are therein*, and divides the land among them. Various gods formed the escort of Re, and the goddess of that special hour also acted as his

[1] The *Zweiwegebuch*, from a sarcophagus in the Berlin Museum, published by Count Schack.

[2] Totenbuch, 144–146.

guide. On this journey, however, he himself is actually a corpse, his *flesh* as the text says; this melancholy circumstance is indicated by his now wearing the head of a ram.

During the first hour the sun god journeys *into the earth, into the gateway of the western horizon: 120 skenæ long is the journey until he reaches the gods of the under-world.* The second hour bears the name of Wernes, it is a field 408 skenæ long and 120 skenæ broad; from this point another bark is used by the god, which at first is convoyed by four marvellous boats. The field of the third hour is also of similar extent, and here Osiris dwells, with his followers. Here also ships precede him, and he receives a friendly welcome.

The fourth and fifth hour bring us into a strange locality, into the *passages, the secret caverns of the West,* where Sokaris, the ancient Memphite god of the dead, has his abode. There darkness reigns, and Re *does not see who is therein,* yet they hear his voice when he gives his commands. It is a sandy desert without water, the abode of serpents. The bark of Re must itself change into a serpent, and thus it is drawn down through a passage, *the road by which the body of Sokaris entered,* through the mound of sand in which Sokaris is buried, and out of which he still thrusts his head in order to behold the sun.

The sixth hour once more affords water for the bark of the sun; and it arrives *in this field near the body of Osiris.* The seventh brings him danger, for the great storm dragon Apophis, *whose place is in heaven,* has established himself here, and lies on a *ridge of land which is 450 cubits long, and which he fills with his coils.* But *his voice guides the gods to him,* and they wound him: *this great god does not pass over him, but diverts his way from him.* Yet *this secret way on which the god sails in his splendid bark* has yet another difficulty: there is not sufficient water for it, for the dragon has drunk it up and the magic of Isis and of the *Elders* is required to bring the ship on its way. These caverns still belong, moreover, to Osiris, whose *flesh* we here see enthroned as king, while his enemies lie beheaded or bound before him. It is yet more noteworthy that in this hour and the following the sun god arrives at mounds of sand, under which various gods are *buried.* Atum, Re, Khepre, Shu, Tefnut

and others: thus he meets himself and, moreover, actually under his three forms!

In the ninth hour, the rowers of the sun god land and *rest in this city;* in the eleventh, where also the torture of the enemies of Osiris is to be witnessed, the rope by which the ship is dragged is changed into a serpent. In the twelfth, the great transformation occurs, which has been prepared during the eleventh hour. In the tenth hour a beetle had alighted close to Re; now in the cavern *End of the dawn,* the sun bark is dragged through a serpent 1,300 cubits long, and when at last he emerges out of the jaws of the serpent, the sun god himself has become this beetle. He has now become Khepre, god of the morning sun (see p. 10), his former body remains in the under-world, and the god Shu takes the beetle in charge; the new god *comes out from the under-world, and seats himself in the morning bark, and ascends into the bosom of the goddess of heaven.* The sun is new-born and begins his new career.

These are roughly the contents of the book so far as they can be reproduced. The innumerable quaint details with which the confused imagination of its compilers has loaded it cannot be reproduced, and yet they give the book its special character. Thus, for instance, in pictures of the third hour, of the kingdom of Osiris, in the ninety-seven figures in the illustration we see nothing, actually nothing, of all we find elsewhere associated with the god of the Dead. Neither his table of food, nor the fields tilled by the blessed dead, neither the judgment of the dead, nor Isis and Nephthys. Instead we find on one bank three gods standing with sceptres, a hawk, four women who, according to the explanatory text, *weep* or *lament,* four mummies having horns and wings on their heads, and four men who, it appears, represent *the noble dead;* then follows the *rich in magic,* a papyrus stem on which a piece of meat is lying. Behind is a man *who brings the eye and contents the gods,* Anubis with his sceptre before him, and a mummy form provided with hands. The ram with the sword is *the slayer of his foes;* the male and female *bringers* appear also to be bringing eyeballs. Finally, behind Set and Anubis are two monkeys; one of which is seated in a hiding-place, the other, as stated in the inscription, is seated

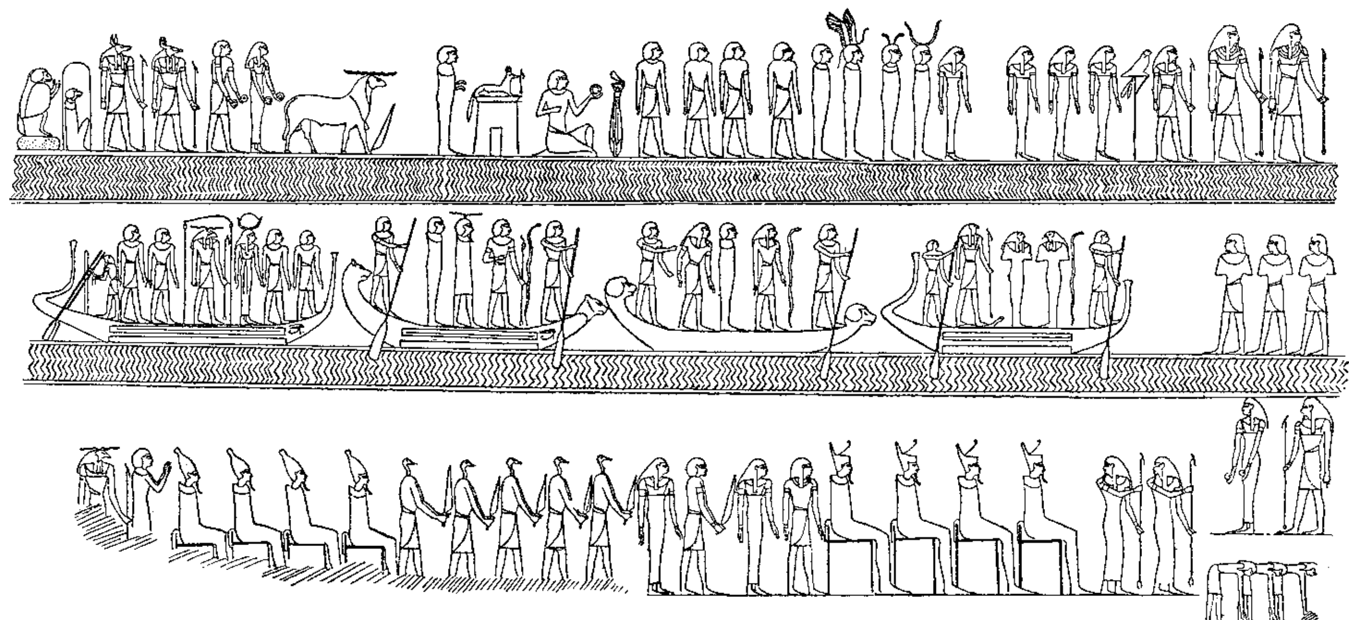


FIG. 59. THE THIRD HOUR OF THE NIGHT, FROM THE BOOK OF AM DUAT. (Tomb of Seti I.)

on his sand. On the other bank we find among others two gods in long garments, one of whom signifies Orion, a god in a short skirt, the *Western*, the goddess *who is upon her flame*, the goddess of birth, the *five*, five bird-headed beings with knives, and others. Between these are two groups of four gods enthroned wearing the crowns of Lower and Upper Egypt, and these eight gods all represent Osiris, to whom this locality belongs, corresponding to eight different titles of the god. These are *The mightiest of the gods, king of Lower Egypt, He who is seated upon his throne, Bull of the West, Conqueror of Eternity, Representative of the Stars, First of the Westerners, Lord of the West.* Behind all these again stands a man praying, and the god Khnum. When we turn to the ships which are conducting the sun bark we find in them the serpents *Sparkling of face, Fire in countenance, Fire in eye*, and also hawks and female hawks, with *Lords of sceptres* and *He who is in the country*, with the pilots, *Flaming Face, Knife in the countenance*, and *Rower of rowers.* What in the world is the meaning of all this? In vain we search in the text for an explanation; here we are told that those in the upper row *create the ocean, make the advances of the Nile*, while those below *cut up souls, and ensnare shadows*, and harry the enemy with fire and sword.

We are also informed that these beings worship Re; he speaks kindly to them, and gives them drink, and when he has passed away from them they lament. But what help does this give us towards understanding the individual figures? And yet the man who compiled this grand book on the basis of one similar and more ancient, undoubtedly associated ideas with the whole of this and took delight in all the allusions concealed in these pictures. We need not, however, greatly lament our ignorance, for what is incomprehensible to us here does not represent popular ideas, nor does it contain deep speculation. It is the phantasy of a strange people, who have given it the form in which we now see it, and who were nothing more than compilers of magic spells. The titles, with which the whole book is pervaded, point to this. Whoever knows these pictures and names, *to him it is of greatest use upon earth and of use in the great under-world.* Or: *who knows them*, he possesses *food in the*

8

under-world, and is satisfied with the gifts of the followers of Osiris, while his relations upon earth also make gifts to him. Or, again: *He is a passenger of the Bark of Re in heaven and in earth. He, however, who does not know these things,* he cannot escape Apophis. Every word, every picture of the book is thus a protection for the fortunate possessor, and without doubt it was dearly paid for as such, to the man who first supplied it.

A supplementary book has also survived to our times, called by us the Book of the Gates, according to which lofty fortresses stand between each of the hours, guarded by watchers and by fire-breathing serpents. It retains more of the usual conceptions, and its magic purpose is not so apparent as in the Amduat; it follows it, however, only too closely in its construction and arrangement.

In the whole of this literature there is only one point that is of interest for us. It is that there was a time when it was valued and much in request. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the kings of the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties caused their tombs to be constructed at Thebes, these texts were painted on the walls and sarcophagi. As we wander to-day through the solemn passages of these colossal tombs, the pictured forms of the Amduat gaze down on us from all sides, as though the ancient Egyptians had no higher ideas concerning life after death than these absurdities. The next century also supplied the dead of other ranks with portions of this book on papyrus rolls to serve as a sure protection. The book, however, never became generally popular, and remained, as it deserved, a *secret* of the magic art.

CHAPTER V

FUNERARY CUSTOMS OF THE EARLY PERIOD AND OF THE NEW KINGDOM

SINCE the excavations of the last ten years have acquainted us with the earliest cemeteries of Egypt, we have known that even in that country, where such elaborate provision was made for its dead, burial was at first a simple matter. A narrow trench in which the body was laid with the knees drawn up to the body on the left side. There the body decayed, and after a few years any one molesting such a grave would merely find a skeleton with the bones detached. A remembrance, moreover, of this oldest form of burial, in which the body decayed and fell to pieces, influenced the later Egyptian, without his being aware of it; his prayers for the dead still included the wish that the limbs of the deceased should once more *unite themselves*, and that his head might again be *attached* to his body.

In the later period, when the Egyptian knew how to preserve the body from decay, by means of mummifying, he still made use of these expressions, employing them as allusions to the body of Osiris rent in pieces by his foes, and it is very possible that the legend of the dismemberment of the body of Osiris may earlier have grown out of this ancient ritual, which in its original form referred to limbs fallen apart from each other.

At this time it was customary to place something in the hand of the deceased, which was considered likely to be of use to him. Thus in one hand we find a flat palette, used during his lifetime for rubbing the green paint with which he adorned his body, and in the other hand a leather bottle. Near the body a large number of objects are laid, jars and bowls with food and drink, that the deceased may not go hungry; harpoons

and flint knives, that he may hunt for food, and defend himself against his foes; a chess board, with which he may wile away the time, hair ornaments and palettes, with which he may perform his toilette as elaborately as in life. In addition to these there were others which could only have been of supernatural service to him. The small clay boat should enable him to cross the lakes which, as we have already seen (pp. 91, 94), surround the heavenly regions of the blessed. The clay ox is for him to slay; the clay hippopotamus will afford him good sport; the clay maid-servant in the great tub will there knead with her feet and make barley into dough for him, to provide him with his favourite beverage of beer. And the other crouching figure of a woman is obviously adapted to provide her lord with the joys of love, and for this reason is she so grandly painted with various colours, to appear as though she were decked with garlands and decorations, and therefore are her thighs so enormously developed, a detail which at the present day is regarded by the African as the highest feminine beauty.

Other graves of this earliest time already possess elaborations which point to an attempt at improving the disposal of the dead. The bodies were still laid in the crouching position, but they were wrapped in matting or hides, or were buried in two great jars. They would then dry up in the arid soil, and form a kind of natural mummy. Or the grave was dug somewhat deeper, lined with brick, and covered over with a flat stone to protect the contents from being crushed. It was yet more secure when a short shaft was cut in the rock, which opened below on a small chamber, whose opening was walled up, and a heap of stones piled over it, safeguarding the corpse both from robbers and jackals.

Another more elaborate form we find first employed for the graves of the kings. The great tomb at Negada, in Upper Egypt, which was probably occupied by Menes, the first king of whom anything was known by the later Egyptians, is a rectangular brick building, with strong walls sloping rapidly at the top. This was covered with a slight roofing of palm stalks. In the centre was the chamber containing the body of the king, surrounded by four other chambers containing the great mass of

food, and of jars of beer and wine, the ivory couches, the magnificent stone vases, and all the other household goods which would be required by the king in the hereafter. Similar graves were constructed at Abydos by his successors, and in one of these we first meet with a circumstance which was destined later to become of importance: the king was not buried alone, but in small chambers near him rest his court; as is shown by the small gravestones in these chambers, the wives of the ruler, his body-guard, and even his court dwarfs and his dogs, are buried around him.

But this form of grave construction did not long remain the exclusive property of the king; the nobles copied it closely, and then the kings for their part adopted a new kind of tomb, the pyramid, which from the end of the third dynasty, about 2800 B.C., became the exclusive form of the royal tombs.

The Pyramids, which have so often been called the marvels of ancient Egyptian history, may indeed be so considered. They bear witness to the immeasurable power and dignity to which this ancient kingdom attained. Even the first known pyramid, the step pyramid of Sakkara, built by King Zozer, is a colossal building, whose walls, constructed of blocks of limestone, tower up for no less than 60 m. in height. But what is this in comparison with the Great Pyramid of Gizeh, the building erected by his fifth successor, Kheops? In order clearly to realize its dimensions, we must imagine the great square of Lincoln's Inn Fields, where the area is exactly that of the Great Pyramid, and covering this space we must imagine a mass of stone building the height of the cathedral at Strassburg. And this colossal building, the design for which was repeatedly enlarged during the long reign of the king, was designed solely to protect the body of the Pharaoh from injury; it corresponded to the heap of stones piled over the burial chamber. That the king ventured to devote the whole resources of the kingdom to this one object shows that the preservation of the body was at this period considered a sacred duty; an idea obviously influenced by that hope of a possible resurrection of the body which we have previously mentioned (p. 95).

But as every extravagance speedily comes to an end, so did

the rage for pyramid building. The two immediate successors of Kheops built on the same gigantic scale as their predecessor, but all later monarchs of the Old Kingdom (and among them were some who reigned long) contented themselves with pyramids of relatively small size. And we must add that these smaller pyramids accomplished their objects quite as well, or quite as badly, as their colossal rivals, for neither the one nor the other proved able to afford lasting protection to the body. Notwithstanding the masses of granite with which their narrow

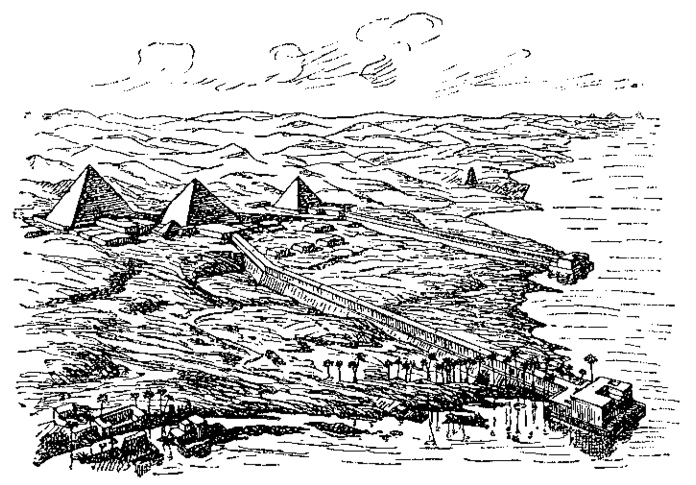


FIG. 60. PYRAMIDS AND MORTUARY TEMPLES AT ABUSIR.
Below in the valley the great gateways, from which covered passages led to the pyramids. (From the restoration of L. Borchardt.)

passages were blocked, they were all of them pillaged in ancient times.

As the interior of the pyramid could not be entered after the burial, it was necessary that the place set apart for the worship of the dead monarch should be near it on the outside; a temple where offerings could be brought, and also storehouses and various chambers for preparing the food; there must also be dwelling-houses and business offices for the priests and officials of the pyramid. The whole formed with the pyramid a *town*, and bore a name, which signified its eternal permanence and

magnificence: *Horison of Kheops*, or *Great one of Khephren*, or *Pure places hath Userkaf.*

Around the pyramid of the king, according to ancient custom, were buried those who had surrounded him in life, the princes and princesses, and all the great nobles of his court. These graves were arranged round the pyramid like a town, with regular streets, varying greatly in size, in material, and in decoration, but in essentials all of one type, that which the fellaheen of the present day prosaically, but most aptly call the mastaba, *i. e.* the bench. Externally the mastaba has the rectangular form of the earliest royal tomb, but it combines

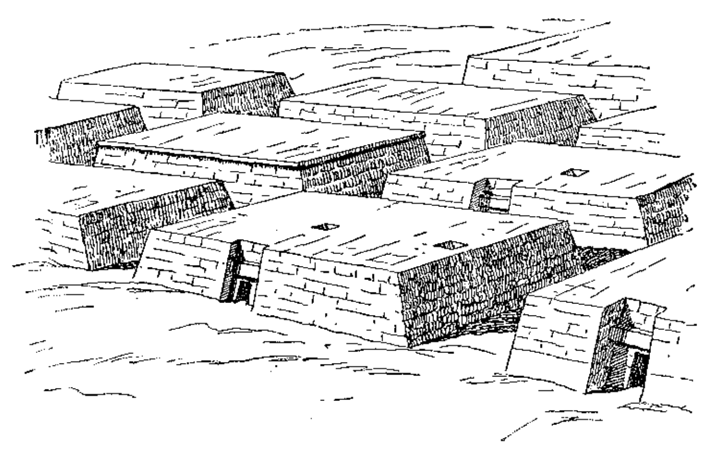


FIG. 61. MASTABAS. (Reconstruction by Perrot-Chipiez.)

with this all the precautions which had been invented in the meantime for safeguarding the body. A vertical shaft was sunk deep into the rock, and a small lateral chamber chiselled out at the end, in which the body was placed. Above this shaft a rectangular mass of stone blocks was raised, faced with blocks of hewn stone, so that the mastaba resembled in appearance a stone building with sloping walls. The shaft was carried right up to the roof, for on the day of the burial the body had to be let down it; this having been accomplished, the entrance to the burial chamber was walled up, and the shaft filled to the top with blocks of stone and rubbish.

As the realms of the dead were supposed to be in the west, or at least to be accessible from the west (p. 87), so everything

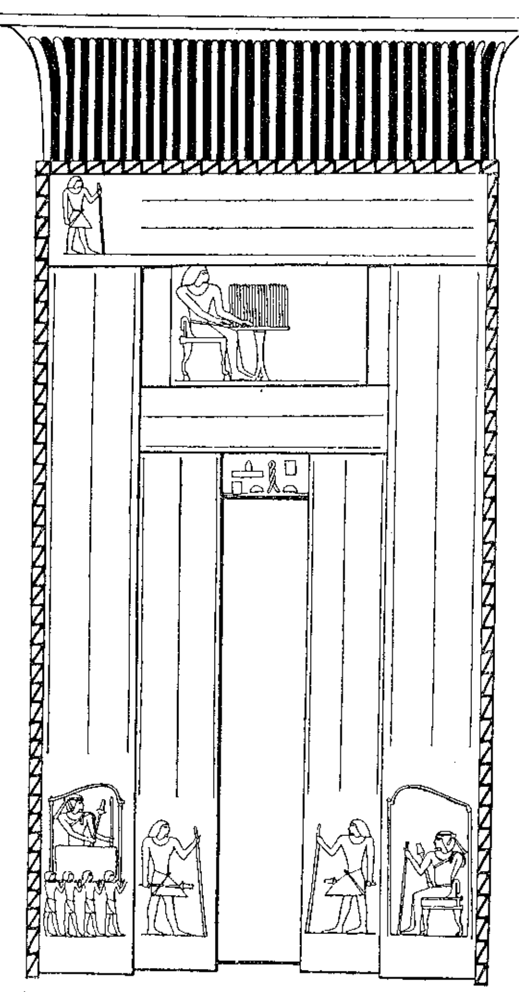


FIG. 62. FALSE DOOR OF TOMB OF PTAH-HETEP. (Sakkara.) The hieroglyph inscriptions are omitted with the exception of the name of the deceased.

which was done for the dead was arranged to face that quarter. Where it was practicable the graves were situated on the western

bank, so that the body could be taken to the west for burial; the place where offerings were made to the dead was on the east side of the mastaba, in order that any one speaking to the dead should be facing the west. These places for offerings at the mastabas were marked by the so-called false door, the conventional imitation of a door. It represents the entrance to the interior of the tomb, the door through which the dead could emerge to secure the offerings brought by the survivors. In the larger tombs these niches were deepened and form a chamber, with the false door on the far wall. At first these chambers were of small dimensions. The chamber of Meten, now in the Berlin Museum, and which belongs to the third dynasty, is actually only a deep narrow niche, widened out crossways at the end in front of the back wall. It just gave room for the two priests who had to pray and sacrifice at the grave, and also allowed persons offering to deposit their offerings on the right and left sides. The walls of this small chamber are furnished with all manner of suitable pictures. His people are bringing to the deceased food and household furniture, and his dogs (he was a chief huntsman), and supply him with game for his offering, while the mortuary priests perform their ceremonies on his behalf. At the entrance two long inscriptions tell how greatly Meten had succeeded in life, and what a fine house and large garden he had been able to lay out.

During the reign of Kheops, several years later, we find that more space and more complicated decoration were considered necessary, and by the fifth and sixth dynasties many of the great nobles constructed actual mansions for their mastabas. Thus the tomb of Mereruka, vizier of king Pepi, contains no fewer than thirty-one chambers, twenty-one of which are devoted to the deceased, six to his wife, and four to his son. Here there are also what are not found in all such tombs, representations of agriculture, of cattle-tending, hunting and snaring birds, craftsmen and sailors, musicians and dancing women, butchers and wine treaders, and whatever would appear interesting and attractive to an Egyptian of the upper classes. No doubt these representations had special reference to the tomb. The cattle, game, fowls, the corn and wine were placed there to be utilized

as offerings at the grave, the artisans work for his benefit, the ships bring gifts to him, and with music and dancing the deceased can be amused as in life. But close examination shows that this purpose becomes increasingly only a matter of secondary importance. If the boatmen were really only intended to bring gifts, it would not have been necessary to represent how they would fall to fighting and cudgelling each other, and equally unnecessary to perpetuate on the walls of the tombs what the butchers called out to each other, what the sower sang, or what the swaying movements of the dancing girl were called. In all this we recognize an attempt to render the decorations of the grave more varied and artistic, even though the pretext for them had to be forcibly adduced. These changes, however, could scarcely have occurred had there not also been some change of ideas. It is probable that by this time the idea had obtained of celebrating the feast days of the dead as a joyous occasion. For this, the large chambers, with their cheerful and artistic decorations, would be far more suitable than the narrow rooms with their monotonous paintings.

But even in the Old Kingdom, everything connected with the offerings and feasts of the dead became more luxurious during the course of centuries. Of what the earliest offering to the dead customarily consisted can now be inferred by the signs employed in writing the word "offering." It consisted of a mat, on which was placed a dish containing bread. When, therefore, we find the deceased called upon *to come out to the voice*, and to take possession of his offering, the *thousand loaves, thousand jugs of beer, thousand oxen, thousand geese, and all good, pure things*, it is permissible to doubt whether any one ever contributed greatly towards the realization of these words. It was an obsolete form, whose observance cost nothing. Ordinarily the survivors would deposit some loaves on the table of offerings in front of the false door, and pour water over them. At great festivals they would perhaps bring a haunch of beef in addition, and they would then be considered as having completely fulfilled their duty. The long list of food, which it was usual to inscribe near the scene which represented the deceased man feasting,

with its five kinds of wine, fourteen varieties of cakes, and ten kinds of fish, must have been merely a pious wish.

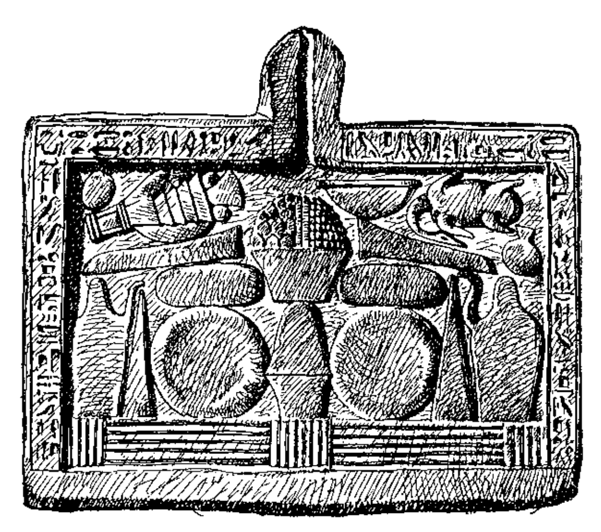


FIG. 63. TABLE OF OFFERINGS OF THE NEW KINGDOM.
At the bottom is the mat with the bread pan, on which are heaped loaves, water jars, fruit, a roast goose, etc. (Berlin, 2273.)

The great tombs of the Old Kingdom, which I have just described, were provided for on an entirely different scale. This is shown by the number of ordinary, superior, and chief priests which were attached to them. When so large a staff (in the tomb of Mereruka there were forty-seven mortuary priests) was employed to take charge of the food brought for offerings, the amount of offerings must have been proportionately large. Here also apparently it was the example of the kings, who employed a large number of important people at their pyramids, that was imitated. The old wholesome idea that sons and grandsons should tend the grave was no longer held; these important personages had too many other duties to allow them to undertake the regular charge of a tomb. So there remained no other alternative but to set filial piety on one side, and to provide for the deceased by a business arrangement. A bargain was made with some relatives or employés, or even with those who had no connection with the family, by which some specified land or

property was made over to them. In return they undertook to provide the offerings to the deceased, to perform the prescribed ceremonies, and to guard the tomb carefully. These mortuary priests thus formed a colony at the great tombs, with settled orders, of varying ranks, and with regulations of their own.

It can easily be imagined that this custom introduced by the great nobles would soon spread among people of more moderate means. A man who himself was only a mortuary priest has left behind a tablet[1] on which he recounts the various persons whom he has provided for his daughter's grave. If we may infer his pecuniary circumstances from the roughness of this inscription, it would not be possible for him to have made such ample provision. Possibly the king came to his aid in this matter, as he often did in the Old Kingdom.

This interposition of the king was of so remarkable a character that we cannot well pass it over. In the upper classes of Egyptian society, which principally subsisted on the favour of the Pharaoh, and at Court ate *what was excellent, that he gave*,[2] it naturally came to pass that on application to the king deserving persons would be assisted in founding and supporting their graves. We frequently hear of such cases; in one instance the king entirely provides for the construction of the tomb, for another (his physician) he gives at least the false door,[3] for a third he orders a stone sarcophagus to be provided,[4] and yet another hopes that *in his grave the mortuary offering will be supplied from the granaries, from the treasuries, from the workshops of the royal jewellery . . . and from every place of the Court from which an offering to the dead shall be provided*.[5] What was done in isolated cases during the Old Kingdom, must have been almost the rule at the primitive time when the developed system of burial was confined to a very small circle of the highest personages, and it was then hoped, in the case of every deceased person, that the king would supply his tomb with food.

As it was expected of Anubis, the ancient god of the dead, that he would supply the dead with provisions, so it was expected of the king: *the offering that the king gives! the*

[1] Berlin, 14108. [2] Westcar, 7, 21. [3] Mariette, *Mastabas*, D. 12.
[4] Inscription of Una. [5] Mariette, *Mastabas*, E. 12.

offering that Anubis gives! thousands of loaves, beer, oxen, geese, of all good things! That is the prayer uttered more frequently than any other at the tombs. And this petition must have come down from a very early time, for its opening words are almost meaningless, and it became the recognized prayer for the dead of the Egyptians. *The offering that the king gives* is, for the Egyptian, the prayer of all prayers. For thousands of years it persisted, meaningless and distorted, but ever with its ancient wording, and it was even employed for the gods in the temples. As long as the Egyptian belief existed at all, so long was it inscribed on all tombs, and on all objects deposited in them. We, therefore, meet with its hieroglyph signs from the earliest times until we are weary of them, and would gladly ignore them. However, if we entertain kindly feelings towards the ancient Egyptians, we shall not ignore this petition; but, on the contrary, read it aloud with emphasis, for this is what the occupants of the tombs request from posterity. They ask us for that *breath of the mouth which is of use to the dead and also not difficult*[1] for him who utters it, and charge us to do so by all that is sacred to an Egyptian: *even as we desire that our local gods should love and reward us, and that we should bequeath our official positions to our children*, or *even as we love life, and hate death.*

In other respects also the grave inscriptions often address the future visitor. One assures us that he has every claim to the attention of posterity, because he has been a good man *who has done no evil against any one.* He has also *built this tomb of new material, and has taken no man's property for it.*[2] And *all men who enter this tomb and behold what is in it, and protect its inscriptions . . . they shall become elders in their city and venerable in their province.*[3] Woe, however, to those who injure the tomb; the deceased will *summon him before a court of justice*, for though he can no longer appeal to earthly justice, he can point out the evildoer to *the great god* near whom he dwells in death.[4]

Yet neither these causes nor yet their well-founded revenues

[1] Berlin, 7311 u.o.
[2] *ib.* 15126.
[3] Siut, i. 225 *et seq.*
[4] Berlin, 15126 u.o.

could save the Egyptian tombs from the fate that naturally awaited them; even the most wealthy nation cannot provide for perpetuity a never-ending ceremonial for the benefit of its dead. What did it avail that the reigning Pharaoh intended faithfully to fulfil his pious duty towards the *royal ancestors* and all the former queens and princesses. A day would inevitably come when his advisers would point out to him that it was already difficult to provide sufficient establishment for the tomb of the Pharaoh himself, and that it was impossible to arrange adequately for all the relations of the king. There would therefore be no alternative but to confiscate the endowment of some half-forgotten ancestor to supply the necessities of the present time. When King Sahure expressed a wish to reward his old palace official Persen with a permanent gift, it might well be most just to appropriate the foundation of the ancient Queen Neferhotpes, and to bestow on this meritorious man the two cakes and the oil which she had secured for her grave as a daily offering from the temple of Ptah.[1] What could not be avoided even in the prosperous circumstances of the royal family would necessarily be doubly unavoidable in private families. Even the most wealthy, after a few generations, must have been forced to employ the revenues of the older graves for the purposes of graves of their own time. The mortuary priests also would only trouble themselves about the more recent graves, for which they received payment; the earlier ones were closed and neglected. What would then happen we can learn from an instance borrowed from the modern Egyptians. In the fifteenth century of our era the Mameluke Sultans at Cairo built burial places for themselves which rivalled in size the tombs of the ancient Egyptians. They were mosques, and contained schools and accommodation for students. Their maintenance and the salaries of the large staff employed there were provided for by rich endowments. These endowments were confiscated at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and already these tomb-mosques have become melancholy ruins, from which everything worth taking has been torn down and stolen. Some have been inhabited by gangs of beggars, the successors of the mosque officials who once lived there, others

[1] Berlin, 11406=Mariette, *Mastabas*, D. 45.

have been profitably made use of by the State as magazines. We have no ground for assuming that things were otherwise in ancient Egypt, when disused tombs would also quickly fall into ruins. A great number of objects found in later tombs show how the earlier ones were pillaged; the name of the dead man in whose grave they were first placed is erased, and that of a new possessor substituted; coffins, statues, and all the other grave furniture bear traces of this double usage. The tombs themselves show this even more clearly: almost all of them were broken into and plundered in ancient times. We often find that the grave inscriptions have been chiselled out and replaced by that of a new burial, and even more frequently we find a still rougher usage of the old graves. They were pulled down, and as much of them as could be carried away utilized as building material. There was then nothing to prevent the desert sand drifting into those ruined tombs, rising higher and higher until it formed a new level on which a later generation once more erected graves. Thus in Sakkara, near the pyramid of King Teti, over the ruined graves of his time there are those of the New Kingdom, and above these again graves were once more built during the Hellenistic period, and all alike are shattered and pillaged. It is a melancholy sight, which recalls the pessimistic verses in which an ancient Egyptian poet lamented the uselessness of constructing graves: *he who built there in red granite, who constructed a hall* (?) *in a pyramid; who supplied there what was beautiful in this fine work* . . . his altar shall *be as empty as those of the weary, who die on the canal embankment without leaving any survivors.*[1]

Now and then a pious successor would undertake to restore some such ruined grave; thus Entef, prince of Hermonthis, boasts, in the Middle Kingdom: *I found the chamber of offerings of the prince Nekhti-oker fallen down, its walls were old, all its statues were broken, there was no one who heeded it. Thus it was rebuilt, its site was enlarged, its statues were renewed, and its door built of stone, so that his place surpassed those of other noble princes.*[2] What Entef did here was regarded altogether as a religious

[1] Speech of a man weary of life, 60 *et seq.*
[2] Berlin, 13272.

duty, but how few of those who boast *that they restored that which they found decayed* can actually have done so: it was quite impossible. In fact, what could be the object of restoring ruined graves, when the robbers, as so often happened, had penetrated to the sarcophagus itself, and had torn the body out and destroyed it? This was generally their object, for it was here that they found the objects that could be most easily disposed of. The altar, stone casing, stands, etc., which stood in the chamber above, were of little value compared to the booty which they expected to find in the coffin, and never would the peace of the corpse have been disturbed had not these offerings been placed with it. Notwithstanding this, the Egyptian still continued to place his offerings in that position, and this he must have done not merely to show his reverence for ancient tradition, he must have considered that such offerings were of great importance to the well-being of the deceased; prayers and offerings were not sufficient. These practices later became more widely developed, but even in the early times they were sufficiently complicated, and they are too characteristic to be passed over without comment.

In the treatment of the body attention was concentrated on the attempt to preserve it, and to retain its natural appearance. If this could be done, the soul would find its accustomed abode there, and might once more awake; with this hope the body was treated with natron and asphalt, and the limbs wrapped in linen; over the face was placed a mask of linen and stucco, intended to give it a natural appearance. The "mummy" was then laid in a sleeping attitude on the left side, the head supported on a head-rest, and enclosed in the coffin, a rectangular chest of stone or wood, the sides of which were strong enough to protect the mummy from injury. How it was the dead were not confined to their coffins, how they could *go in and out unhindered, to see the sun,* was beyond human comprehension, and belongs to the domain of supernatural phenomena. The Egyptians themselves, indeed, felt that there was a contradiction here, for on many coffins we find various expedients adopted which are intended to solve the difficulty. At the upper end of the coffin, on the side towards which the face of

the mummy is turned, there is painted a pair of large eyes in order that the dead body may *behold the Lord of the Horizon, when he sails across the heavens,*[1] and a door is sometimes painted inside the coffin upon the side, to enable the dead to come forth. The form of the coffin is generally very simple. It is a polished chest with a flat cover, or it had in addition (and this must have been the appearance of the coffin of Osiris) four corner posts and an arched cover. In the Middle Kingdom, when the coffin was generally brightly painted, it was customary to inscribe it on the inside with various chapters from the ancient funerary texts; the most important of these were always arranged in rows on the outside, and commended the deceased to the protection of the gods who guard the dead: to Anubis, Osiris, Keb, and Nut, Isis and Nephthys, and, before all others, to the four sons of Horus (page 94). These four spirits arose from the water in a lotus flower, and the water god Sobk, by command of Re, had to catch them with a net—she, however, who produced them was Isis.[2] Without doubt they succoured Osiris in his misfortunes, and saved him from hunger and thirst, and thus it is their part to do the same for the dead. This gave rise to a peculiar conception, which had already begun in the Old Kingdom, although it was later that it was universally accepted. By them the entrails were prevented from causing the corpse any unpleasant sensations; they were taken out of the body and placed in special boxes or jars, each of which were placed under the charge of these spirits (p. 146). The deceased was also protected against hunger and thirst, by the same methods employed in primitive times; actual bread, meat, and drink were laid in

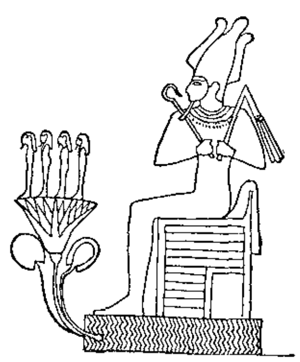


FIG. 64. THE SONS OF HORUS ON A FLOWER IN THE LAKE, by the side of which Osiris is sitting. (From the Book of the Dead, Ed. Naville, I, 136.)

[1] Steindorff, Grabfunde aus den Königl. Museen zu Berlin, ii. 5.
[2] Totenbuch, 113.

the sepulchral chamber, and further provision was made by furnishing him with models of a household, granaries, with labourers who continually emptied sacks into them; a maid-servant who ground corn for him between two stones; another who made bread of it and baked it, and again a third who prepared beer for him. Other females, either richly dressed or entirely naked, were provided for his personal service. A pottery house, with all manner of food in the courtyard, was laid in the grave for his abode.

The ancient custom of providing ships for the dead, which

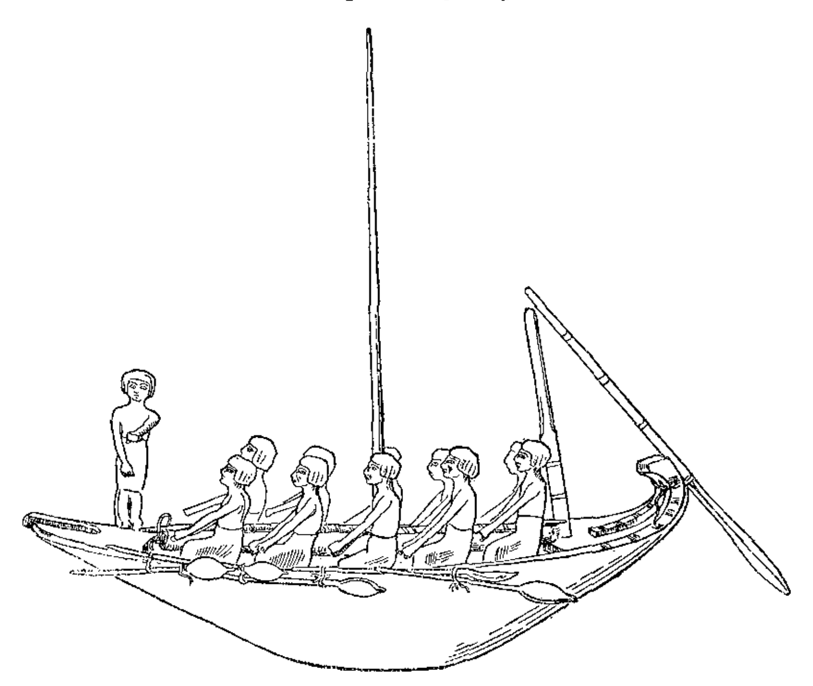


FIG. 65. MODEL ROWING BOAT. Painted wood. (Hilton Price Collection.)

rendered him independent of the favours of the celestial ferryman, also lasted into the Middle Kingdom. At Dahshur, near the pyramid of the third Sesostris, real ships were buried in the sand but ordinary mortals contented themselves with small models. As, however, these boats have the dead laid as a

mummy under a canopy, with the mourning women and the priests, who are reciting the ancient rituals out of their rolls, and as a rowing boat is also provided to tow the ship bearing the dead, it is quite clear that the original object of these boats has been lost sight of, and that they now represent the funeral procession crossing the Nile.

The amulets and sacred symbols which later were placed on the mummies in such profusion, to protect them against injury on the journey, play no part at the earlier period. We need only mention here the ivory wands on which various strange figures are engraved, the *many amulets which guarantee protection.* One of these figures is called the *fighter*, and appears to be intended to protect the dead from snakes and scorpions. How greatly these dangers were feared for the dead is shown by the endless magic formulæ against snakes in the pyramid text, and there is another detail which bears witness to it. So far was this fear carried, that it even extended to the ordinary hieroglyph signs written in the grave. In many graves the two letters f and z and are written with the head separate from the body. The sign of the lion also (*rw*) is occasionally rendered harmless in the same manner. In other graves the birds were forced to forego their legs in order to carry out this idea, a precaution which does not commend itself to our modern notions.

The quantity and nature of the outfit and property given to the dead naturally depended on the wealth and affection of the survivors; weapons, staves, seats and boxes, articles of toilet and of jewellery, clothes, and scented oil, these are all found in one or other of the graves. And with the actual objects deposited in the mortuary chamber there were others which were only pictorially represented. In the earliest graves short lists are found which recount the various kinds of oil or of linen which the dead must have, while from the end of the Old Kingdom all that the deceased may require, such as bracelets, necklaces, sandals, staves, weapons, materials for handicrafts, and many other objects, are painted or inscribed on the walls of the tombs.

But the most remarkable of these offerings is undoubtedly the statue of the deceased. Its meaning can be gathered from

the position it customarily occupies in the mastaba; it stands in the so-called serdab, a small walled-in chamber near the chamber of offerings, which generally communicates with it only by a narrow slit. Thus the dead abides close to his worshippers, if only in effigy, he hears the priests recite, and the fragrance of the incense and the scent of the food can reach him; perhaps it was thought that his soul might quit his body in the mortuary chamber, and inhabit this statue as a second body. In graves which are not of mastaba form, and which do not possess a serdab, a statue is still introduced in some way; in the rock-cut tombs they are often placed in the farthest chamber, while in the smaller graves of the Middle Kingdom at least one figure of the dead is laid on the coffin.

Of these two forms of graves just mentioned, the second of them, the rock-cut tomb, is scarcely later than the mastaba itself; as early as the fourth dynasty the great nobles occasionally cut their tombs in the cliffs at Gizeh, instead of building them. But on the plateau of Memphis, where most of the large tombs of the Old Kingdom are placed, it was so far more convenient to build a mastaba, that at all periods a rock-cut tomb was exceptional. Its especial locality is in the south, where high, steep cliffs enclose the Nile valley; here it was simplest to cut a tomb horizontally in the cliff. These rock tombs were decorated, like the mastabas, with inscriptions and pictures, and in them also there was a false door, and a shaft which terminated at its lower end in the mortuary chamber; but this arrangement developed in early times in accordance with another point of view. The rock tomb was looked upon as the house of the dead, and, like the abode of the living, it had in front a spacious reception court, behind was the large chamber, and behind this again was the actual dwelling of the dead man, the niche occupied by his statue.

The small brick pyramid, which from the time of the Middle Kingdom was the usual form of grave in provincial towns, was of course an imitation of the great royal pyramids; but they were built by people of small means, for notwithstanding their important appearance this form of grave was the simplest and most convenient. A cavity in the rock served as a sarcophagus;

this was covered over with a vaulting, and above it, on a slight substructure, there was built a small pyramid of whitewashed bricks. On the east side a gravestone indicated the place for offerings; on it the deceased is shown sitting at meat, with his wife, and frequently this is followed by long rows of children and relatives who pay homage to the deceased. In the sand before the grave lies the table of offerings on which the food was laid and the water poured.

In addition to all the arrangements which we have described, greater security and happiness were ensured for the dead man by means of the many ceremonies performed at the preparation of the mummy at the funeral, and at the provisioning of the deceased. They are similar in character to those we have already (p. 45 *et seq.*) met with in connection with the worship of the gods. Here also every separate action must be accompanied by its proper formula which refers to its prototype in the acts of the gods. Endless and wearisome are these texts, and by no means beautified by the number of puns introduced into them.

The ritual of embalming as a whole has come down to us only in a very late form; we shall not, however, be very much mistaken if we assume that the embalmer and his assistant, the learned Kherheb (p. 54), here figured as the gods who anointed the body of Osiris and wrapped him in linen bandages.

We know far more about the ritual for the ceremonies at the grave, which on the day of the funeral were first performed on the mummy itself, and afterwards on feast days on the statue of the deceased. The principal person at these ceremonies was a priest called the Sem, but the Kherheb and several other personages also took part. When the dead man had been sprinkled with water, and incense had been offered before him, three persons proceeded to the grave, and wakened the Sem, who had swathed himself in wrappings before he laid down. When he had slowly raised himself in the appointed manner, the four together undertook the part of those *sons of Horus* who had taken care of Osiris (p. 129). At a further stage of the performance, where the Sem wore a peculiar decoration over the breast, and carried a staff, he represented

Horus, son of Osiris. Some called out: *Oh Isis, Horus is come, that he may embrace his father*, and the Kherheb cried: *hasten that thou mayest see thy father.* The Sem then exchanged his attire for a panther skin, and while the animal to be sacrificed was being cut up near him, he announced to the deceased: *I have rescued this my eye out of his mouth. I have cut off his thigh*—thus the Sem presented the thigh of the animal to the deceased, as Horus once presented his own eye, which Set had torn out (p. 34), to his father. But before the deceased could devote himself to enjoying this food, the most important of all the ceremonies must be performed on his behalf. *The opening of the mouth and of the eyes.* Twice with small oblique axes, and once with a chisel was the face of the deceased touched, and when that and all else had been done, and when the Sem with his little finger had opened mouth and eyes, the dead man was once more enabled to receive food. The Sem raised his staff and assigned to him his food. Finally he anointed the dead man, and burnt incense before him, gave him a headcloth, clothed him in bandages, and gave him a staff and flail, similar to those carried by Osiris.

In addition to this ceremonial there was also the actual sacrificial ritual, those endless spells, in which the offerings were termed the *eye of Horus* in accordance with the performance just quoted: *I bring thee the eye of Horus, which I have taken away from Set*, or *I bring thee the eye of Horus, after thou hast counted it*, and so forth. If any statement was made concerning the eye, the names of one of the gifts offered was joined to it, for the added word must form a pun.

In addition to the tomb, there was another place, in the case of an important personage, where care was bestowed on the provisions of the deceased. During his life-time he had on feast days been present when the offerings from the altar of the god were distributed (p. 47), and in death also he wished to share in this meal. Thus in the Middle Kingdom a statue of the deceased was placed in the temple, and request was made for him for *all that was furnished for the altar of the god.* This matter was not entrusted solely to the prayer, but a perpetual supply of a fixed number of loaves for the feast was prudently

purchased from the priesthood. These were laid in front of the statue, and no doubt became the property of the mortuary priests. This arrangement often supplied the kings with an opportunity of recognizing faithful service, as on many a statue bearing a priest's name, we read that it was placed there *as a reward on the part of the king.*

There was also a third place where the Egyptian might hope to secure his hopes for the future life, in the sacred city of Abydos. Since the kings of the first dynasty had resided at Abydos, and were buried there, the idea had gained ground that Osiris, *first of the dwellers in the West,* who was worshipped there, was a peculiarly benevolent and holy god. The most important of his relics, his head, was there, kept preserved in a box, and at his grave the great festival of the god was celebrated. Lucky indeed were the dead who were buried here, not far from the stairs which led down to the grave of the deity. They were companions of the king of the dead, they were the *great ones of Abydos,* and his *court.* They *received a place in the ship* of the god, they took a share of his food, *and to them "welcome" was spoken by the great ones of Abydos.*

It must therefore have been the supreme wish of every pious Egyptian to be buried in Abydos, and in fact from the end of the Old Kingdom, many people of all classes preferred a grave in this sacred place to one at the Court or at home. He who found it impossible to build a tomb at Abydos, gained at least something by visiting the god at Abydos, and erecting a stone *on the staircase of the great god;* in this way he secured a place for himself in the midst of these privileged dead. The Berlin Museum shows us how universal was this idea. The greater number of small gravestones and memorial slabs of the Middle Kingdom are from Abydos. Many of their owners, as they themselves inform us, went to the holy place for professional reasons, others sought it solely as pilgrims, and others again undertook the pilgrimage for the first time after their death. In the tomb of the priest Khnemhotp, at Beni Hasan, there is a great pictured scene which, as the inscription accompanying it informs us, represents a voyage made by him in order *to learn to know the things of Abydos.* His mummy lies on a

vessel under a canopy, and the Sem priest and Kherheb remain at his side throughout the voyage. In the sacred town he was placed before the god of the dead as a new vassal, and also took part in his festival services. Then, accompanied by wives and children, he returned home once more to occupy his magnificent tomb at Beni Hasan.

Most of these funerary customs, which we have here described, were even more widely practised in the New Kingdom, and where occasionally some practice disappears or falls into abeyance during this period, it is only to make way for some newer and richer conception, which is intended to be equally beneficial for the dead.

With regard to the arrangement of the tombs, the two forms are retained which were popular during the Middle Kingdom. Simple folk contented themselves with the small brick pyramid, the more important ones were laid in rock chambers. The kings also constructed these rock tombs for themselves, but the form given to them was new. A long narrow passage, with which antechambers sometimes communicated, led to a chamber, the *gold house*, in the centre of which stood the stone sarcophagus, with the body of the monarch. All the walls were covered with religious texts and scenes, and as these are principally taken from the descriptions of the realms of the dead (p. 109 *et seq.*), it has been surmised, not without probability, that it was the underworld itself which was in the minds of the constructors of these tombs: a long passage, which became more and more intensely dark, until the *gold house* was reached where dwelt Osiris, the king. In this must have consisted the only connection between these tombs and the cult of the dead. They are situated in the desolate western valley of Biban el Moluk. Neither their space nor their isolated position are adapted for such ceremonies. Apparently the ceremonies and offerings of the dead kings were carried on in Der el Bahri, Gurneh, and in all those temples on the western bank of Thebes, in which the kings were worshipped in company with the Theban deities.

There is also a marked change in the graves of the common people. Up to this time the scenes in the tombs and on the gravestones were confined to the endless subject of supplies for the dead, and the gifts brought by the survivors or the attendants, but these now drop into the background. In their place we find scenes of a religious character: pictures and inscriptions from the Book of the Dead and similar texts adorn the walls, while on the gravestones we find representations of the dead man adoring Osiris or the sun god. Also those pictures of life on earth, which only appear rarely in the mastabas, now multiply so fast in many of the graves, that they almost form a record of a noteworthy career. How the occupant of the tomb conducted his business, how he was distinguished and rewarded by the king, is all clearly set forth, and even the scenes of the funeral and funerary worship are of a personal character which they did not possess earlier. As in the religious poetry of this period individual character is permitted to appear, so also it appears in these tombs: in them the dead is no longer the illuminated one, whom men honour and feed separately from themselves; he is the beloved father and husband, the friend and man who is taken away from his relatives, and for whom they weep and lament. It is true that the Sem continues to open his mouth, and the Kherheb utters his formulæ before him in prayer, as these are necessary for his welfare. But to these formal inscriptions there is added the cry of the wife as she embraces the mummy, before it is deposited for ever in the tomb: *I am verily thy sister, thou great one, do not forsake me. . . Why is it that thou art far from me, thou who didst love to jest with me; thou art silent and dost not speak.* Behind her, and behind the priests, lament the relatives of the dead, and the poor women and children whom he has befriended: *Woe, woe . . . alas this loss! The good shepherd has gone to the land of eternity; he who had so much society is now in the country which loves solitude! he who so willingly opened his feet to going, is now enclosed, bound and confined. He who had so much fine linen, and so gladly put it on, sleeps now in the cast-off garments of yesterday.* The distinguished persons who followed the funeral journey of their colleague, while they took no part

in these lamentations, yet expressed pleasure at the universal sympathy. *How good is this which has befallen him . . . he loved his god so well* that *he permitteth him to arrive at the West accompanied by generation after generation of his servants.*[1]

In the meantime tables of food, and stands with jars were brought, for the funeral feast followed the burial, and was held either in the tomb itself, or in bowers constructed of flowers and twigs. How it was conducted on the day of the funeral (and also doubtless on feast days when offerings were made to the dead) is frequently shown on the tombs of the New Kingdom. There sit the relatives and friends, in holiday garb, and decked with flowers; they eat and drink, watch the dancing women, and listen to the song of the harper:[2] *How peaceful rests this righteous prince, the excellent destiny is entered upon. Since the time of the gods the bodies enter thereon, and their successors stand in their place,* so long as *Re shows himself in the morning and Atum descends on the western hill,* so long as *men beget and women conceive and all nostrils breathe air. But all those to whom they give birth, soon go down to the place appointed for them.* And now the singer addresses the deceased himself, as though he were seated among the feasters, and exhorts him to enjoy this short life with his wife: *Celebrate the good day, provide ointment for thyself and fine oil for thy nostril and wreaths and lotus flowers for the body of thy beloved sister, who sits at thy side. Let song and music come before thee. Cast all sadness behind thee, think on joy until that day comes, when man arrives in the land where the people keep silence.* Meanwhile the dancing women leap yet more wildly and shamelessly, and the servants offer the wine jars with yet more eagerness: *drink until thou art drunken;* one lady calls for more wine, because all within her is *straw;*[3] another, alas! has progressed much further in drunkenness; dolefully she grovels on the ground, her robe slips from her shoulder, her lotus flower hangs drooping over her arm, and the maidservant who is hurriedly bringing the ominous basin arrives too late!

While the upper classes were thus so lavishly commemorative

[1] Wilkinson, III. pl. 67.
[2] From the tomb of Neferhotp at Thebes.
[3] Paheri, pl. 7. The following from Wilkinson, I. 392–393.

of death, little would be done for people of narrow means. Nevertheless an opportunity was afforded them of securing a tolerably decorous burial. Since the desire for an orthodox funeral had penetrated the lower classes, enterprising people had undertaken to satisfy their demand. They procured an old empty tomb, enlarged it, and let out places in it. There would soon be no space left, for coffins were piled up over each other from the floor to the ceiling, but yet it was a real tomb which was thus available for the fisherman, the peasant, the artisan, or the dancing girl. They were laid in real coffins, and the survivors could deposit their tomb equipment and other gifts, as was done for wealthy people.

But there were again poorer people who could not hope for a place even in such a public tomb. Where their bodies were laid in the sand we do not know, but we believe that we can discern their attempts at participation in the benefits of a tomb. They fashioned small wooden dolls[1] remotely resembling mummies, had them inscribed with their names, wrapped them in a scrap of linen and laid them in a small coffin; this was buried in front of the entrance to a large tomb, in the hopes that by means of his wooden representatives, the deceased would have some share in the benefits enjoyed by the occupant of the tomb.

The importance attached to the eternals of the burial, which is made evident by these expedients, appears also in the form of the coffin. Up to this time the coffin had merely been what was required for its purpose—a strong box that secured the body from injury. But in the New Kingdom a most unnatural fashion was adopted, and it was made in the form of a mummy, for to the people at this period the form of the mummy was considered something marvellous and sacred; even where the mummy was laid for greater safety in several coffins, as from the time of the Middle Kingdom was often done, the form of the outer granite sarcophagus resembled its contents. At the beginning of this period the mummy-shaped coffin often has the appearance of being wrapped in wings; one should be an Egyptian to understand this. As the goddess Isis once

[1] Ausfürhl Verz., S. 184.

protected the corpse of Osiris by taking him between her wings, so will she do to this new Osiris represented by the mummy. Towards the end of the New Kingdom the attempt to give expression to the sacredness of the mummy was made by painting the coffin with countless religious illustrations; gods, sacred animals and sacred symbols must figure there, and it is easy to see how mechanically and perfunctorily this work was accomplished by the manufacturers. I use the word manufacturers advisedly, for it is characteristic of the funerary customs of the New Kingdom that the things required for them were manufactured and offered for sale. It is easy to prove that this was the case. On objects where the name of the deceased must appear in the inscriptions the manufacturers left a gap, in which the purchaser could insert the name. As a rule this was done, but it is omitted fairly often, and this omission shows us the mercenary manner in which the old customs were now observed. To this there is one exception, the portrait statue of the deceased, the nature of which precluded the possibility of any such wholesale production.

This statue is rendered with great care, down to the most delicate features of the face, the details of the clothing and also of the inscription. All this must have been done in accordance with the directions of the purchaser. A statue and a wooden figure in the Berlin museum, however, prove that even this was occasionally left unfinished.

By far the most numerous objects found in tombs of the New Kingdom are the so-called ushebtis, the small figures of mummy form, which to-day crowd our museums. In the Middle Kingdom when they first occasionally appear, they afford no clue as to the object for which they were laid in the graves; they bear only the name of the dead. In the New Kingdom their duty to the dead is clearly indicated by the implements they hold in their hands, hoes with which to work in the fields and a basket. The inscription on them tells us more. *Oh thou ushebti, when I am called, and when I am required to do any kind of work, which is done in the underworld . . . and am required at any time to cause the fields to flourish, to irrigate the banks, to convey the sand from the east to the west, thou shalt say,*

here am I.[1] The meaning of these specified labours must remain uncertain. One thing, however, is clear, that the dead feared lest he should be forced to undertake all kinds of rough



a. b. c.

FIG. 66. USHEBTIS OF THE NEW KINGDOM. (*a*) THE SCRIBE HUI, in the costume of a living man; (*b*) A LADY, TAMIT; (*c*) A QUEEN. (Berlin, 4652; 4406; 8528.)

field work in the realms of the dead. It is a primitive conception which here reappears. Once upon a time, when the nation was a nation of peasants, they dreamed of a paradise for their dead in which barley should grow seven cubits high, with ears two cubits in length;[2] to be a labourer on such land was the happiest fate conceivable. This idea lasted on, and when Osiris began to be accepted as king of the dead, it was also considered that he would deal with his subjects in the same way as the earthly king did with his vassals. He would draw up lists of them, and from this register he would call first to one, then to another, of the deceased, to come to work in the fields, to irrigate the land and to construct dams. This prospect contained nothing uncongenial to a peasant; it ensured him a continuance of the

[1] Totenbuch, 6. [2] *ib.* 109.

life he lived on earth, but it would present a very different aspect to a man of higher rank. The officials, priests, artisans, soldiers, ladies, for them the prospect of rough work in the hereafter would be most unwelcome. In this perplexity some ingenious brain hit on this strange alternative—to supply the dead with these figures as substitutes, and let them undertake the work in his place. Even the king could not dispense with them, and any one who has observed the crowd of ushebtis of Sethos I. in our museums, will realize that they must have been made for him by the thousand. Among ushebtis of private people we find some single ones of especially careful workmanship, which are almost treated as portraits of the deceased. These would be laid with special care each in a small coffin, while the usual rougher ones are merely placed together in wooden boxes. As superstition increased, a new terror connected itself with these figures; what if the dead man met in the hereafter with an enemy who rendered the ushebtis disloyal to him, as had once occurred to him with his servants during his life? An especially cautious man would therefore write on his ushebti after the usual formula these words: *Obey him only who made thee, do not obey his enemy.*[1]

As the principal intention in depositing these figures was to enable a man to escape his future destiny, so a similar result was aimed at in providing the so-called heart scarabs. We have already seen how the conception of Osiris as king of the dead led to a demand for the ethical purity of the deceased, and also how a judgment of the dead was believed in, where the heart of the dead was weighed in the scales. That this idea was not universally acceptable is easily understood, but the means used to escape this pressing danger is far more difficult to reconcile with our ideas. An attempt was made to get rid of that inconvenient witness. On the breast of the corpse, over the position occupied by the heart, was laid a large stone beetle, which was a sacred symbol representing the sun god; on it was inscribed these words: *Oh heart that I have from my mother! Oh heart that belongs to my spirit, do not appear against me as witness, provide no opposition against me before the judges, do not*

[1] Ausfürhl. Verzeichnitz, S. 182.

contradict me before him who governs the balance, thou art my spirit that is in my body . . . do not suffer our name to stink . . . tell no lie against me before the god.

To the other friend of the dead, the sun god, the small stone pyramids are addressed, which are found in many graves of the New Kingdom; they were intended to enable the dead *to gaze on the sun when he ariseth, and when he setteth.* On this account this model of the tomb has two doors, in both of which the dead

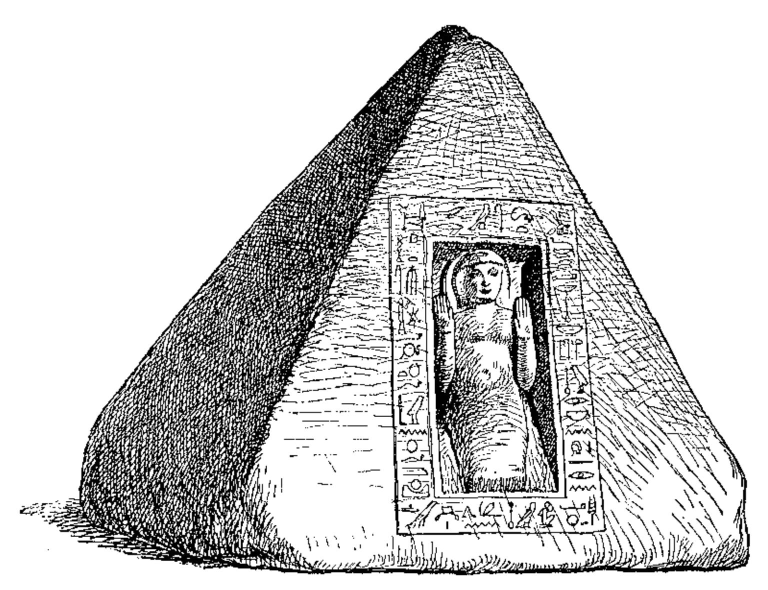


FIG. 67. PYRAMID, FOR PTAHMOSE, HIGH-PRIEST OF MEMPHIS. (Berlin, 2276.)

man is kneeling; on the one side he prays to the morning sun, on the other to the evening sun. Clearly it was hoped that, thanks to this pyramid, the man would in future be able actually to walk to the door of his tomb every morning and evening. In the real entrance passages of the tomb also there are often found prayers to the sun, or to the sun and moon, which the deceased are expected to recite at that place.

It is doubtful what was the object of the so-called pectoral on the mummies; they are small tablets, similar to those usually worn by the gods and the kings, but while the latter bear the

name of their wearer, we find on these the dead adoring the sun god, or else the figures of the gods of the dead. Perhaps they are in some way intended to express that the dead are under the protection of these gods. The state of our knowledge is no better as regards the many objects used as amulets, with which the mummy was covered, eyes, beetles, hearts, sceptres, crowns, etc. It is true that sentences in the *Book of the Dead* inform us that whoever wears the 𓊽 may enter freely into the realms of the dead, eat the food of Osiris, and be justified, or that he on whom 𓎬 is hung *will be guarded by Isis and Horus, and* welcomed with joy. But these vague and uncertain explanations date from a period which was itself no longer clear as to the original meaning of the amulets, and thus we are thrown back upon supposition. It is evident that the beetle, which was also laid in the body of the mummy, as a representation of the sun god, must bring good *fortune, and it can be seen that the* ancient symbols of Osiris and of Isis, 𓊽 and 𓎬 (p. 16), which were frequently placed in the hands of the mummy, would secure a welcome for the man into the kingdom of Osiris. Doubtless the rising sun enabled the dead man to behold it, but to the eye, the amulet that occurs most frequently, it is impossible to assign a meaning; is it the eye of Horus, the model of all good gifts? In the case of the crowns and sceptres we may perhaps assume that they imparted to the dead the divine powers which dwelt in them. The small heart may work in the same way as the heart scarab already quoted, and the several serpent heads may serve to frighten the reptiles who

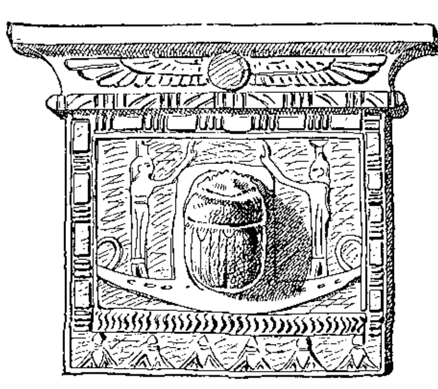


FIG. 68. PECTORAL: on it is the bark of the Sun, on which the god in form of a beetle is adored by Isis and Nephthys. (Berlin, 1983.)

attacked the dead in the tombs. The small cryolite head-rest may secure a quiet sleep for the dead. But what can be the purpose of the level and square? and what of the stairs or terraces, and of many other objects hung round the neck of the mummy? How was it possible, as a late text informs us, that

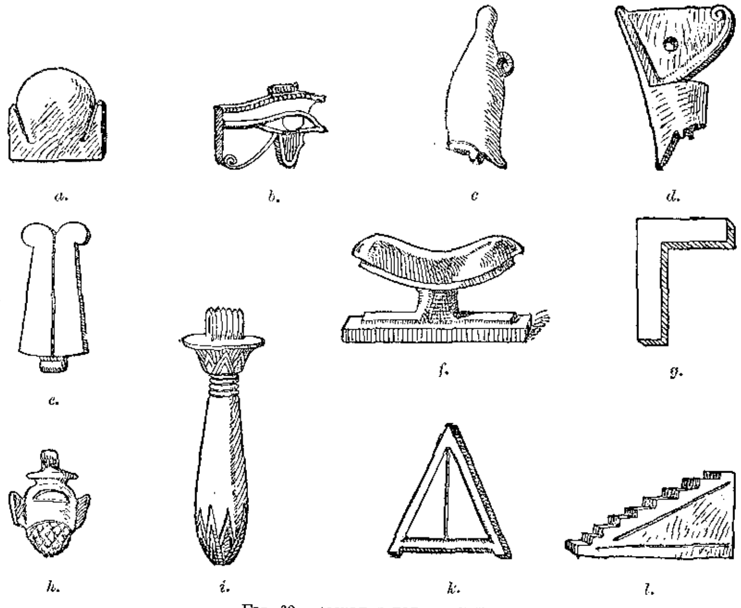


FIG. 69. AMULETS FOR MUMMIES.
a. Rising Sun. *b.* Eye. *c. d. e.* Crowns. *f.* Head-rest. *g.* Square. *h.* Heart. *i.* Papyrus sceptre of goddess. *k.* Level. *l.* Staircase.

no fewer than 104 amulets should be needed, when the body was as well protected by other means as though it were that of Osiris himself? [1]

While in the graves of the New Kingdom the dead were amply supplied with house plenishing and furniture, clothing and adornments, and while, according to the primitive custom, no hesitation was felt in adding a naked woman on a bed, the care for their provisions which had earlier been the most important consideration, was now greatly overlooked. Wooden vases, in imitation of stone jars, wooden models of roast geese,

[1] Brugsch. Thesaurus, p. 1402.

and of dates were occasionally laid in the graves, but on the whole this matter was entirely entrusted to the magic powers of the jars containing the intestines of which we have already (p. 129) spoken, and which at this time have become some of the most important contents of the tombs. As a rule the four vases are of alabaster, and each of them has the head of one of the four sons of Horus, so that a man, a monkey, a jackal, and a hawk share in the charge of the dead man.

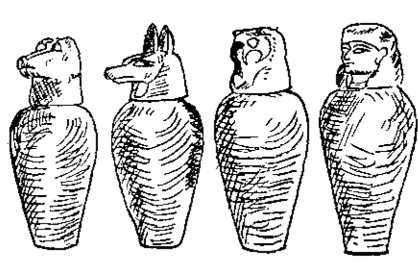


FIG. 70. VASES TO CONTAIN THE INTESTINES.
With the heads of the four sons of Horus.
(Berlin, 7193, 7191, 7189, 7188.)

Considering all those things as a whole, we observe that the burial customs of the New Kingdom have, to a large extent, lost their primitive simple character, while their religious and magical characteristics have greatly developed. This is shown also in the changes in the funerary literature. We have seen how the kings at the end of the Old Kingdom secured for themselves a collection of these writings in the inscriptions in their pyramids, and again later how private people had similar documents inscribed on their coffins. In the New Kingdom not only the walls of the tombs were in great measure decorated with these religious texts, but also long rolls of papyrus were placed with the dead, containing spells, the knowledge of which was considered specially useful for him, as is stated at the end: *he who knoweth this spell he* shall enjoy this or that good fortune. These texts form the so-called Book of the Dead, of which we have quoted so much in the fourth chapter, when describing the later conceptions regarding the realms of the dead. By the end of the New Kingdom other papyri are added, that Book of Amduat, which was first compiled as a useful protection for the royal tombs (p. 109).

All these funerary papyri were manufactured in numbers like the other tomb requirements; with what result may easily be guessed. The vignettes are artistic and are often coloured,

while the handwriting appears to be neat and regular, but they are full of errors and omissions; frequently the wrong vignettes are placed with the text, or a sleepy scribe has confused the lines of his copy as it lay before him and has written them in wrong order. This did not prevent these Books of the Dead, which contained so many ancient sacred sayings, from being themselves for the next few centuries regarded as in some way sacred, and from being treated accordingly. Thus further mystifications were continually introduced into the funerary customs of the Egyptians, until by the time of the New Kingdom we expect to find them stifled ere long in their own absurdities. This, however, was not the case, and we shall see that for almost another thousand years the religion of the country continued to develop on its own lines.

CHAPTER VI

MAGIC

MAGIC is a barbarous offshoot of religion, and is an attempt to influence the powers that preside over the destiny of mankind. It is not difficult to see how the belief in such a possibility could arise. On one occasion it appears that a prayer has been heard by the deity, on another it is apparently ignored; thus the idea naturally arises that the words in which the prayer was uttered on the first occasion must have been specially acceptable to the god. This construction is therefore accepted as the most effective, and becomes a formula which is regarded as certainly successful and able to control destiny. This erroneous conclusion leads further to the adoption of certain actions or prohibitions. To-day we have been lucky in some particulars in which we were unlucky yesterday: obviously we offended the deity yesterday in some way, whereas to-day we have pleased him. Could we only discover how this was, we might in future avoid the misfortune and secure the good luck. He who ponders over these matters, and understands the nature of the gods, may soon discover this point, and he who is most intimately acquainted with the gods must necessarily be the best magician. In the case of the Egyptians, it was the "chief kherheb" (p. 55), the priest who knew the sacred writings from beginning to end, who was considered to be the man best qualified.

When once the ideas of a nation have struck out in this direction—and it is precisely the youthful unsophisticated nations that are most readily attracted by it—there is no check on it, and by the side of the noble plant of religion there flourishes this fantastic weed of magic. With nations of limited

understanding it completely stifles religion and there ensues a barbarism, where the magical fetish is the supreme object, and where the sorcerer with his hocus-pocus takes the place of the priest.

No one would wish to ascribe a similar condition of affairs to such a youthful nation as the ancient Egyptians; it would be as incongruous as it would be to compare the imbecility of a childish old man with the folly of a promising youth. But the Egyptian people shared very fully, and also at an early period, in this absurdity.

It is true that it is difficult to define the limits; not every custom that deals with the supernatural must be immediately stigmatised as magic. To give food to the dead, or to paint pictures for him on the walls of the tombs, of a life of sheltered ease, is not to deal with magic, and to recite the formula of offerings at the grave is to offer up a prayer, lifeless and formal though it may be. Apart from the worship of the gods, and the cult of the dead, and also setting aside the Book of the Dead and its magical developments of which we have already spoken (p. 147), we shall find enough remaining.

Various are the forms of the magic spells. The simplest and perhaps the most primitive are those in which the magician himself informs the evil principle that he will exorcise it. One of the primitive spells against serpents, which we find in the Pyramids, runs thus: *the serpent sinks which comes out of the earth, the flame sinks which comes forth from the sea. Sink down!*[1] Or the sorcerer assures the dead, who have haunted a house and brought illness into it, that he can in turn injure them; he can destroy their graves and deprive them of their offerings.[2] He explains to one malady that it would be perilous for it to attack this patient since there is no member of his body which is not uncanny. The tongue in his mouth is a serpent in its hole, his anus is the abhorrence of the gods, his teeth will crush the malady, his foot will tread it

[1] Pyramid texts. Kap 28. W. 322.
[2] Zauberspr. f. M. u. K., p. 83. For the correct meaning I am indebted to Count Schack.

down, and in his mouth it may disappear.[1] And where commands, threats and warnings do not avail, the magician makes use of gentler means, and remarks to the malady, how much better off it would be in its harem, than here with the poor child : *come, go to sleep, and enter where are thy beautiful wives, in whose hair is myrrh, and on whose shoulders fresh incense is laid.*[2]

As a rule, however, the magician demands the aid of the gods. He appeals to Re, the all-seeing, that he will keep watch on the evil spirits,[3] or he accuses the serpent to Re on account of its evil deeds. It has bitten the earth, it has bitten Keb,[4] or he details to the diseases how such and such a limb of a man is under the charge of a god. He also frequently speaks as though he himself were a god : *Flow forth, poison, come, flow to the ground! Horus commands thee, he destroys thee, he spits at thee. Thou canst not arise but fallest down, thou art feeble, and art not strong, thou art afeard and fightest not, thou art blind and seest not, thy head hangs down and thou dost not lift up thy face . . . owing to that which is spoken by Horus powerful of magic.*[5] Or: *Thou hast not the upper hand over me, I am Amon. I am Onuris the good warrior. I am the Great One, Lord of Might.*[6]

In such spells if the magician names this or that god, the reason for his doing so is found in episodes that occur in the legends of the gods; a god who himself once triumphed over serpents must be the best protection against them, and a goddess who had herself reared an infant would be the best help to a dying mother. And as it was only common-sense to allude directly to these prototypes, a form of spell was composed which consists of an episode out of the history of the gods, from which practical application can be drawn. This is the case with the following spell, which cures those who are stung by a scorpion, by means of the goddess Bast (p. 13): *Oh Re! come to thy daughter, whom a scorpion has bitten on a lonely road! Her cry reaches even to heaven . . . poison oppresses her limbs, and flows*

[1] Zauberspr. f. M. u. K., p. 19 *et seq.*
[2] *ib.* p. 19.
[3] *ib* p. 40, *et seq.*
[4] Pyramid texts, chap. 24 = W. 314.
[5] Metternich Stela, 3 *et seq.*
[6] *Mag. Pap.*, Harris. 8, 5.

in her flesh, and she turns her mouth to it, i. e. she attempts to suck the injured part. Re answers her: *Do not fear, do not fear, my splendid daughter; behold, I stand behind thee. It is I who destroy the poison, that is in all the limbs of this cat.*[1]

Naturally, however, those gods were most frequently appealed to whose lives were more especially the divine prototype of human life—Osiris and his family group. The crocodile will retreat in alarm when he is reminded how the body of Osiris lay in the water, and was guarded by the gods: *Osiris lies in the water, the Horus eye is with him, the great beetle spreads itself over him . . . he who lies in the water, comes out of it whole; who draws near to him in the water, draws near to the Horus eye. Back, beasts of the water! . . . Lift not up thy face, ye beasts of the water, when Osiris passes you. . . . Oh ye dwellers in the water, your mouth shall be closed by Re, your throat shall be stopped by Sekhmet, your tongue shall be cut out by Thoth, your eyes shall be blinded by the god of magic. These are the four gods that guard Osiris, these are they who guard him who lies in the water, all men and all animals who lie in the water. This day!*[2] It is a safeguard against a scorpion sting to remember the unfortunate mother who was forced to conceal herself with her child in the swamps of the Delta. *I, Isis, gave birth to Horus, the son of Osiris, in the swamps of the Delta, and rejoiced greatly thereat. . . . From fear I hid him and kept him secret. . . .* There however once *I found him, the beautiful golden Horus, the fatherless child, as he bedewed the earth with the water of his eyes, with the moisture of his lips, his body was weary, his heart throbbed. . . . I shrieked* and called out, "*My father is in the under-world, and my mother in the realms of the dead, my eldest brother lies in his coffin. . . . I will call to some one of mankind, if haply their hearts will turn to me.*" *I called to the inhabitants of the swamps, and their hearts turned at once to me. The people came to me out of their houses and hastened to me at my call. They bewailed at the greatness of my misfortune,* but none of these were able to help me. *A woman came to me, the most experienced of her city. . . .* She said to me, Set cannot have done this,

[1] Metternich Stela, Z. 9 *et seq.*
[2] *ib.* 38 *et seq.*

for Set does not come into this province, he does not wander through Khemmis. . . . Perchance a scorpion has stung him. . . . Then Isis laid her nose to his mouth and marked the smell of it. . . . She recognized the ailment of the heir of the gods, and found that he was poisoned. Then she took him swiftly in her arms. . . . "Horus is stung, oh Re; thy son is stung, Horus is stung, the inheritor of thy heritage." . . . Then came Nephthys weeping, and her laments sounded throughout the swamp. Selkis cried: "What has occurred? What has occurred? What hath chanced to Horus, to the son of Isis? Pray to heaven, then will the company of Re halt, and the Bark of the sun will not pass by Horus."

Then Isis made her voice reach unto Heaven and her cry unto the Bark of Eternity. Then the sun stood still and moved not from its place. Thoth came, provided with his magic, with a great commission from Re, and spake: "*What is the matter? What is the matter? Isis, thou glorious goddess with the skilful tongue. Verily nothing evil hath happened to the child Horus? . . . I come from the ship of the sun from his place of yesterday, and darkness has come on and light is fled, until Horus is healed for his mother Isis and thus for every (other) sufferer. . . . The protector of Horus is he who is in his sun, who lightens both lands with his beaming eyes, and thus he is the protector of the suffering. The protector of Horus is the Ancient one who is in the lower heaven, who gives commands to all who are there and those who are not, and thus he is the protector of the suffering. . . . The ship of the sun stands still, and the sun journeys not from his place of yesterday, until Horus is made whole for his mother, and until the sufferer also is made whole for his mother.*"[1] Another time Horus had to suffer from a fire which probably consumed the

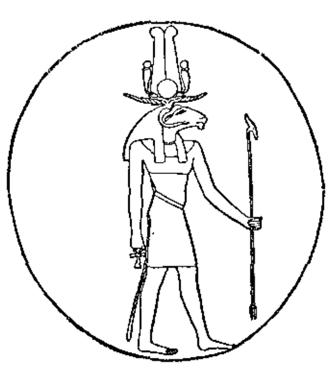


FIG. 71. "HE WHO IS IN HIS SUN." (From the Temple of Esneh.)

[1] Metternich Stela, 168 *et seq.*

hut in which he lay. Then some one told Isis, "*Thy son Horus is burning on the ground. Is there water there?*"—"*There is no water there—There is water in my mouth and there is a Nile between my legs, and I am coming to put out the fire.*" At a later period it was thought necessary to give a less unsophisticated form to this spell against burns, and Isis merely says: "*Water is in my mouth and my lips contain a deluge.*"[1]

Again another time Horus herded his cattle in the pasture, and he did not wish to wander afar for wild beasts were there. Isis and Nephthys therefore fashioned amulets for him: *May the mouths of the lions and hyenas be closed and of all long-tailed creatures who feed on flesh and drink blood, to curse them, to rob them of their ears, to give them darkness and not to give them light, to give them blindness, and not to give them sight, in every neighbourhood on this night. Stay, thou evil wolf. . . . go north, south, east, west; the whole land is thine, and nothing is withheld from thee. Turn not thy face upon me, turn thy face upon the wild animals of the desert. Do not turn thy face upon my path, turn thy face upon some other.*[2] In this last spell we cannot avoid the suspicion that the magician himself invented this pastoral life of Horus, of which we find no other trace recorded. Horus was now established as the divine child before all others, and all things that a mortal boy was obliged to do in Egypt could be ascribed to him. In other respects also the authenticity of these references to the legends which occur in the spells is doubtful.

So far as we have quoted the assistance of the gods appears as a gift which they grant when the magician addresses them in the correct terms, but other instances show a remarkable reversal of natural relations; in order to force him to do his will, the magician threatens the deity. Even in the ancient funerary literature we find similar threats. *Oh, ye gods of the horizon!* begins a spell which has come down to us from the pyramid texts. *Verily, if ye desire that Atum (your lord) should live, that ye may anoint yourselves with oil, that ye may put on garments, that ye may receive your food; then take his*

[1] Ä. Z. 1898. 129.

[2] *Mag. Pap.*, Harris, Rs. A.

hand, and establish him in the Field of Food.[1] And yet more drastic is the wording that follows: *If however thou wilt not ferry the boat to him . . . then will he tear the hair off thy head, like buds on the margin of the lake.*[2] The magician threatens the universe if he shall not *go forth justified: then Re shall not ascend into heaven, but the Nile shall ascend into heaven, and live upon truth, and Re shall descend into the water and live upon fish.*[3] How these threats are to be fulfilled is not stated; in other cases the magician announces that he knows the great secret of the god, his name, in which his power lies. As in the pyramid texts we have already quoted, he threatens *to speak to men* this name, so he does in later magic. For these names of the gods possess terrible powers. If one of them *is uttered on the bank of the river, the torrent is set free, and if one is uttered on land flashes of light are emitted.* When a crocodile attacks the magician who knows this name, he will by its power *cause the earth to fall into the river, the south will become north, and the world will turn round.*[4]

Where, however, did the magician learn these secret names, on the knowledge of which he so greatly prides himself? This question must often have been asked, for a magical text of the New Kingdom undertakes to answer the question candidly. It relates how the secret name of Re was once told. Once upon a time, when Re still ruled on earth *over gods and men together,* Isis was the most subtle of all women, more subtle than men, gods and the illuminated one. *There was nothing in heaven or upon earth which she did not know,* only she did not know the real name of Re, who possessed so many names; she determined however to learn it. When the god had grown aged, his mouth quivered and *his spittle fell to the ground. This Isis kneaded with her hand together with the earth which was with it, and made of it a magnificent serpent. . . . This she laid on the path by which the great god passed when he wished to visit the two lands.* Thus when Re, followed by the gods, *walked there, as he did every day,* the serpent stung him.

The voice of his Majesty pierced even to heaven. His gods said,

[1] Pyr. 246 = P. 161.
[2] *ib.* 293 = P. 439.
[3] Totenbuch, 6, 5.
[4] *Mag. Pap.*, Harris, 7, 1 *et seq.*

"What is the matter?" and the (other) gods said, "What is the matter?" But he could not answer. His lips quivered, and all his limbs shook, and the poison penetrated his body, as the Nile penetrates the country.

When he had somewhat calmed himself, he called to his followers: "*Come, ye who were produced from my body, ye gods who issued forth from me, that I may tell you what hath happened to me. Something unwholesome hath wounded me; I feel it, but mine eyes do not see it. . . . I have never suffered pain equal to this. . . . I am the prince, son of a prince, seed of a god, who became god; I am the great one, son of a great one. My father and my mother invented my name, I am he of many names and many forms. My form is in every god. I am called Atum and Horus Heken. My father and my mother spoke my name for me; since my birth it has been hidden in my body, and by means of it no magic power will be granted to any one who would work magic against me. As I went forth to see what I have made, and to traverse the two lands which I created, something that I do not know injured me. It is not fire, and it is not water, but my heart is on fire, my body trembles, and all my limbs quiver.*"

Thus Re lamented and caused the divine children to be called, *those of excellent speech and learned tongue*, and all drew near sorrowfully. Also *Isis came with her excellence, whose mouth is full of the breath of life, whose spells drive away disease, and whose speech is beloved by those who have no breath. She said, "What is it? what is it, divine father? Behold a serpent hath wounded thee, one of thy children hath lifted up his head against thee, I will overthrow it by means of powerful magic.*"

The glorious god opened his mouth: "As I was on the way, and was taking my walk in Egypt and the desert, for my heart desired to see what I had created, then was I wounded by a serpent that I did not see. It is not fire, it is not water, and yet I am hotter than fire and colder than water. All my limbs are covered with sweat. . . ."

Then Isis spake to Re. "*Tell me thy name, my divine father; the man whose name is spoken remains alive.*" The aged god answered: "*I am he who made heaven and earth, who heaped up the mountains and formed what is upon them. I am he who made*

the water and formed the torrent of heaven. . . . I am he who made the heavens, and made the horizon secretly; I have set the souls of the gods therein. I am he who opens his eyes and it becomes bright, and when he closes his eyes it becomes dark; he at whose command the waters of the Nile flow, but the gods do not know his name. I am he who made the hours and fashioned the days. I am he who inaugurates the year, and forms the river. I am Khepre in the morning, and Atum, who is in the evening."

But the poison did not abate, and Isis said: "*Thy name is not among those which thou hast spoken to me. Say it to me, that the poison may depart; the man whose name is spoken remains alive.*" And the poison burnt worse than fire, so that the god could no longer withstand it. He said to Isis: "*My name shall pass from my body to thy body.*" Also, he continued, thou shalt conceal it, but thou mayest impart it to thy son Horus, as mighty magic against every poison.[1]

Here, as we see, the magician finally keeps the mysterious name to himself, and does not confide it to us. It is probably otherwise with a primitive spell which ensures for the dead the use of the celestial ladder (p. 96): *Come ladder* (*moket*), *come poket, come thy name, which the gods uttered*,[2] may here mean that the gods do not call the ladder *moket*, as men do, but *poket*, and also the strange words, more especially of the late period, which occur repeatedly in the magic spells, were certainly for the most part considered as the secret names of the gods. Others in this abracadabra must be considered as foreign spells; thus the lion spell, *eder edesen edergeh edesen, unites merem edesen, unites emey edesen*, etc., must certainly be Phœnician, as farther on it contains the name of the god Baal.[3]

In order to render these spells efficacious all manner of observances are necessary when reciting them. Any one who wishes to recite for himself a spell to ensure special good fortune, must first "purify" himself for a period of nine days. He must then anoint himself with two kinds of oil, he must fumigate himself with incense, holding the vase containing the incense behind his ears, he must purify his mouth with natron, he must

[1] Lefébure, Ä. Z. 1883, 27 *et seq.* [2] Pyr. 261 = P. 201.
[3] *Mag. Pap.*, Harris, Rs. C.

wash himself with water from the inundation, he must put on sandals of white leather, and two new skirts, and finally he must paint the sign of truth 𓁦 on his tongue with green paint. Then, if I understand rightly, he must step inside a circle which he must not leave during the duration of the ceremony. In the case of another spell, in order to recite it successfully, a complete picture must be painted on the floor; the figure of a woman, a goddess, *placed upon it in the midst of it*, a serpent standing on its tail, a sky, etc.[1] Or a man paints an eye on his hand containing a picture of the god Onuris, obviously with reference to that part of the spell in which the conjuror styles himself the god *Shu, the image of Re, who is within the eye of his father.*[2] And again, in a spell against evil beasts, which is recited on water, and which speaks of the sun god, who once rose to the surface of the flood in an egg (p. 26), as *the egg of the water, the man who sits forward in the boat must hold a pottery egg in his hand;* then *the inhabitants of the water* will believe that it is their god himself that they see, and if they rise to the surface they will fall back affrighted into the water.[3]

It is also advisable that the spell should be recited not once only, but four times in succession,[4] as was the custom from early

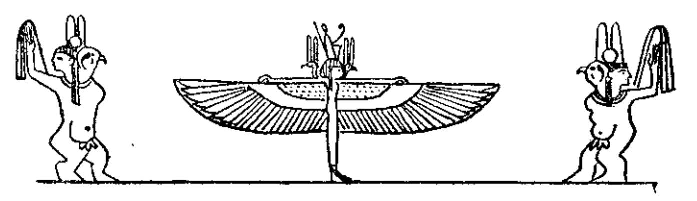


FIG. 72. MAGICAL FIGURES, INTENDED TO BE PAINTED ON A LINEN BANDAGE. (Book of the Dead, 164.)

times with many of the prayers, and that *this day!* should be added to show that it should act at once. Or these words are added to it: *Protection behind, protection that comes, protection!* [5]

These spells must of course be uttered in a solemn voice,

[1] Both from the *Destruction des hommes*, l. 74. 90.
[2] *Mag. Pap.*, Harris, 7. 1 *et seq.*
[3] *ib.* 6. 10 *et seq.*
[4] Z. f. M. u. K., p. 52; *Mag. Pap.*, Harris, 7. 4 *et seq.*
[5] *ib.* . . . 33. 35.

and this was already provided for by their being as a rule composed in verse. They must also have been sung; for a document that contains spells of the New Kingdom refers to them as *spells beautiful to be sung*.[1]

The objects for which magic was called upon to serve were as numerous as the requirements of life. It exorcised storms and bad weather.[2] In the desert it was required as a protection against lions, in the water against crocodiles, and above all against the most sinister peril of Egypt, its snakes and scorpions: were not even the Pyramids of the ancient kings richly stored with spells against these pests? With magic women were assisted in child-birth, it was employed while preparing medicine, and by its means all poisons, wounds and diseases were combated, these latter as well as the dead, those uncanny beings who brought them. For it was an ancient belief of the Egyptian people that the evil dead would forsake their graves and haunt mankind. The gods therefore should shut up *the shadow of the dead, and the dead who work evil to us*.[3] An anxious mother sees a ghostly woman glide into the house in the dark with averted face, and try to busy herself about the infant as an attendant. She says: *Comest thou to kiss this child? I will not let thee kiss him. Comest thou to soothe this child? I will not let thee soothe him. Comest thou to harm this child? I will not let thee harm him. Comest thou to take him away? I will not let thee take him away from me.* And the dead *renounces that for which she came*.[4] This also is spoken by the mother morning and evening over the amulet which she hangs on her baby: *Thou arisest, oh Re, thou arisest. If thou hast seen this dead man, how he comes to N., and this dead woman, the wife . . . never shall she take my child in her arms. Re, my lord, rescues me. I will not give thee up, I will not give my charge to the man and woman, thieves of the realms of the dead*.[5]

The dead man and dead woman would also haunt grown-up people, and if a sick man pondered over the cause of his illness, the possibility must often have occurred to him that one

[1] *Mag. Pap.*, Harris, 1. 1.
[2] Budge, *Nesiamsu*, 121 *et seq.*
[3] Totenbuch, edition Naville, 92. 10.
[4] Z f. M. u. K., p. 12.
[5] *ib.* p. 43 *et seq.*

or other of his deceased relations for some cause was now revenging himself on him. He would then attempt to influence this malevolent relation by friendly representations and would lay a letter in his grave, which he could read. We know of such letters as early as the Middle Kingdom; the most remarkable example however is a long document which an officer of high rank, at the end of the New Kingdom, addressed three years after her death *to the excellent spirit of the lady Eri. What have I done wrong against thee,* he says, *that I am in this evil case in which I am now? Since the day thou wast given me to wife, even to the present day—what did I against thee that I was forced to conceal? If I were to speak once with thee before the gods of the West with the words of my mouth, this letter will inform thee in which my words and my message are set forth. What have I done against thee? Thou didst become my wife when I was young and I have been together with thee. I filled all offices and have been together with thee and have not forsaken thee and have not grieved thy heart.* And also when Pharaoh advanced me to higher rank, I did not forsake thee, and shared all gifts and income with thee. *And when moreover thou wast ill with the illness which thou didst have, I went to a physician and he made medicines for thee and he did all that thou saidst to him.* Then for eight months I had to follow Pharaoh to the south, and could neither eat nor drink, and when I returned to Memphis I wept for thee with my people. The unfortunate widower fastened this letter to the statue of another lady, whom he could trust to forward the message to his wife.[1]

There are moreover magical books which afford *power and strength* against the foe, and diffuse terror; *if waxen figures of gods and men* are made, according to their directions, and smuggled into the dwelling of the opponent, *they cripple then the hand of men.*[2] For this last information we are chiefly indebted to the protocol of a State trial, and these official statements show clearly that such matters were treated with the utmost seriousness. For the protection of the king (if we dare trust the statement of a later document) a magic ceremony was performed

[1] Maspero, *Etudes egyptologiques,* I. 145 *et seq.*
[2] Lee, 1. 4; Rollin, 1888. 1.

each morning, which safeguarded him against his foes, and the idea prevailed that even the gods had recourse to magic to influence their fate. It was known that Thoth read over Re the magic formula of the celestial cow.[1] In this way mankind could aid the sun god, by reciting at certain times the spells of the victory over the dragon Apophis.[2] These conceptions penetrated into the cults of the gods, and their statues in the temples were *protected by magic and excellent words, and all evil driven out of their bodies.*[3] How exclusively magic was employed for the protection of the dead we have already sufficiently shown. The maidservants, the ships, the cakes and granaries, the ivory wands intended to ward off snakes, the ushebti figures, heart scarabs, and discs for the head (pp. 187, 188), all these objects and many others belonged to magic or verged on it. Also the tomb writings referring to the dead, as we have seen (p. 100), acquired in course of time more and more a magical character, and in the New Kingdom their formulæ appeared entirely as magic spells, which might be recited to secure good fortune either for the dead or the living.

We find that this resort to magic was not merely practised by individuals, but that sorcery had its recognized representatives. These were the Kherheb priests, *the scribes of the divine writings*, and their highest positions during the Old Kingdom were filled by duly qualified sons of the Pharaohs.

A delightful collection of folk-tales of the New Kingdom shows us that these priests knew how to adapt their art to secular purposes; how one of them fashioned a figure of a crocodile in wax, which snapped up an adulterer in the water, while another piled up the water of a lake to enable a lady to recover her lost hair ornament. Further, the practice of magic was part of the work of the *house of life*,[4] the learned school of Egypt, and the magic books were systematically arranged and preserved in the royal libraries.[5] They evidently were considered as much a part of literature as the medical prescriptions or the philosophical writings. Naturally they would all claim to be

[1] *Destruction des hommes*, 78. [2] Budge, *Nesiamsu*, p. 146.
[3] Stela Ramses IV., Mariette, *Abydos* ii. 54–55, 25.
[4] *Mag. Pap.*, Harris, 6. 10. [5] Amherst Pap. 1, 3.

extremely ancient. One was invented by the earth god,[1] another by the god of wisdom[2]; another has been found by a priest of the Saitic period in a tomb of a Mnevis bull.[3] As a matter of fact, many of these spells were of later manufacture, while numbers of them are obviously of the New Kingdom; the language in which they are couched and their religious conceptions leave no doubt as to their date. The New Kingdom appears to have been the period when this strange science was specially flourishing.

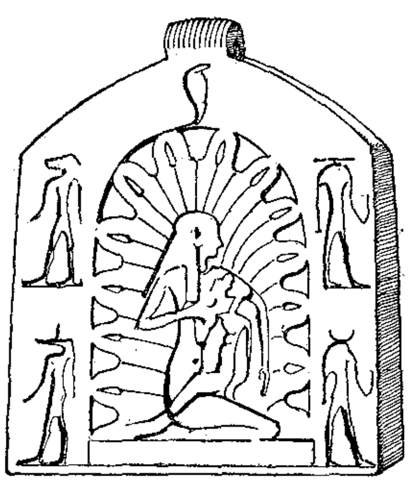


FIG. 73. AMULET. ISIS SUCKLING HORUS AMONG THE LOTUS PLANTS. Figures of four other deities. (Hilton Price Collection.)

A peculiarity of the later magic was the introduction of figures and small stelæ, which were set up in the house or worn on the neck for protection against evil creatures of all kinds. Certain sacred beings had the reputation of being especially efficacious against such perils. One of these was the ancient god Shu, the son of Re, supporter of the sky, and who in Abydos was called Onuris; he was now regarded as *the noble warrior*,[4] *the deliverer* (*shed*), and was represented as a young prince in his chariot slaying lions.[5] A similar *rôle* was played by the strange demi-god Bes (p. 76), the deformed child whom we call Pataikos (p. 77), and, above all,



FIG. 74. SMALL STELA, FOR PROTECTION AGAINST SERPENTS: HORUS WITH THE HEAD OF BES. (Berlin, 4434.)

[1] *Destruction des hommes*, 58.
[2] Griffith, *Stories of the High-priests*, p. 20.
[3] Metternich Stela, 87.
[4] *Mag. Pap.*, Harris, 8. 5.
[5] Berlin. Ausf. Verz., p. 205.

by Horus himself, whom, indeed, no evil beast could harm. For the sake of greater security several of these gods were often combined.[1] To the young Horus would be given the animal head of Bes; a combined figure would be made of Khnum, Re, Min and Horus; or of Khepre, Khnum, Thoth, Min, Anubis, Osiris, Mut and Bast; a combination most gruesome in appearance, but so much the more marvellously effective. One such figure which scarcely contained any characteristic of Re was called *Amon-Re*. It is possible that the pantheistic theology of the New Kingdom, which jumbled together all the gods, found expression in this nomenclature.

These figures, a creation, as we have already said, of the New Kingdom, add to the great number of amulets by which the people from the earliest times had attempted to safeguard themselves. An excellent amulet was a cord, knotted a specified number of times, *one in the evening and one in the morning, until there are seven knots*.[2] Then again seven stone rings and seven gold rings may be threaded upon seven flaxen threads, and seven knots may be made in them ;[3] to this any kind of special medicine may be attached, perhaps a small bottle containing the bones of a mouse,[4] or a seal on which a hand and a crocodile are represented,[5] or a plaque with figures of gods, or some sign ensuring good luck. These last we know well in our museums among the amulets which, as we have seen (p. 145), were placed on the mummies. What powers were ascribed to special amulets, and what basis there was for their efficacy, we scarcely know, and it would have been difficult also for the later Egyptian to give us a clear explanation. He would only have

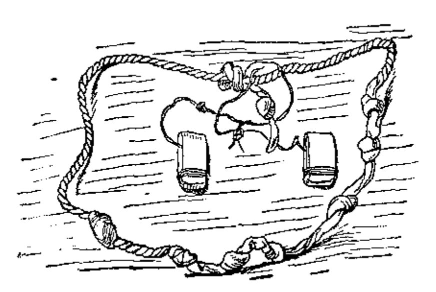


FIG. 75. CORD, WITH SEVEN KNOTS, AND TWO LABELS WITH MAGIC SPELLS. (Berlin, 10826.)

[1] For the following cf. Berlin. Ausf. Verz., p. 299.
[2] Z. f. M. u. K., p. 41.
[3] *ib.* p. 52.
[4] *ib.* p. 30.
[5] Schäfer, A. Z. xxxix. 87.

said that they all contained *hike*, that supernatural power which the gods possess, which lies in their secret names, and by which also certain sacred things on earth are invested, such as the *abounding in magic* crowns of the kings.[1] Some share of this power was transmitted to men by means of the amulets and the magic formulæ; and on it was based the art of the magician.



FIG. 76. AMULET. Twenty-second dynasty. (Hilton Price Collection.)

We cannot enter upon the many superstitions of various kinds, in addition to magic, which existed in Egypt; we can only cursorily remark that two forms of these, which sprang up in Egypt at the latest period, alchemy and the horoscope, do not appear at all during the New Kingdom. The selection of days, the belief that certain days of the year are lucky or unlucky, is, on the contrary, ancient. There exists a calendar of the Middle Kingdom for one month which defines eighteen days as good, nine as bad, and three as half good.[2] Of the New Kingdom, moreover, we have a voluminous papyrus, which gives the same information for a great part of the year, and often attempts to give reasons for it; a day is lucky or the reverse according to some episode in the lives of the gods that occurred on that day. For example, we read that the twelfth day of the first winter month is very bad, and *on that day* one should avoid *seeing a mouse*, for it is the day when *he gave the command to Sekhmet*, i. e. no doubt when Re permitted mankind to be slain (p. 30). And the first of the fourth winter months, which is *good entirely*, and on which *there is a great feast in heaven and on earth*, owes these merits to the fact that *on this day the enemies of Sobk fell upon their way*.[3] These explanations must first have been invented when it was desired to systematize the popular superstitions concerning lucky and unlucky days and to make a science of this

[1] Brit. Mus. 574.
[2] Kahun Papyrus, pl. 25; text, p. 62.
[3] Sallier Papyrus, iv. 14. 2; 21. 2.

distinction of days. It is easy to perceive that it was looked upon as a science, for the papyrus from which we gain this information is actually a boy's school-book. He has copied the document, of which he obviously understood little, as practice in handwriting, but it would surely not have been given him to copy if its contents had not been considered useful and profitable. Here we have further proof that at this period of the New Kingdom superstition grew and flourished; it is no wonder that eventually everything in Egypt was overshadowed by its luxuriant growth.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGION OF THE LATE PERIOD

THE New Kingdom was followed by a period of political confusion in Egypt. During the eleventh and tenth centuries B.C. Egypt was divided into a number of small and feeble states. The high priests of Amon reigned at Thebes, a king reigned at Tanis in the northern Delta, and there were also other rulers, most of whom were probably leaders of Libyan soldiery. Finally, about 950 B.C., one of these Libyan rulers, the powerful Sheshonk, whose capital was at Bubastis in the Delta, acquired the supremacy, and his family continued some time in power. In consequence of this, the cat-headed Bast, goddess of Bubastis, rose to be the official deity of the kingdom and the other gods of the Delta also profited by the favour of the monarch.

But, on the other hand, the glory of the former capital of Upper Egypt and of its god had by no means disappeared, and the Bubastite rulers gave proof of their devotion for Amon: they once more resumed work at the colossal buildings of Karnak and thereby showed that they also were adherents of Amon. In doing this they must have been influenced by practical considerations, for Thebes was a site that rewarded any trouble expended on it. It is true that none of the royal houses of the later period took formal possession of Thebes, for a remarkable fiction had arisen during these centuries to which they all were forced to submit. Thebes could never again be the property of any earthly prince, for it had a divine ruler, Amon; and his representative in the government on earth was not, as we should naturally suppose, his high priest, but his *divine wife*, the mortal bride of the god (p. 72). Thus Thebes had become a sort of spiritual principality, governed by a lady of high

rank, and it was the ambition of every royal house to secure this lofty position for one of its princesses. By rights the divine wife should bequeath her dignities to her daughter. There was therefore nothing incongruous in the acknowledged fact that the reigning lady was urgently invited to adopt as her successor one whom political reasons rendered advisable. This occurred repeatedly during this century and those that followed, and it is not without amusement that we read in an inscription of Psammetichus I. how he accounts for such an event. Owing to his profound gratitude to the god Amon, he feels compelled to present him with his daughter Nitokris; therefore he gives her to the divine wife Shepen-wepet *as her great daughter*, and in the year 655 sends her with great ceremony to Thebes, where the whole population welcomes her. *When she came to the divine wife Shepen-wepet, she beheld her, was contented with her, and loved her.*[1]

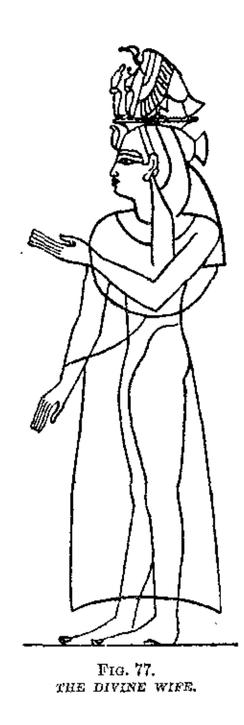


FIG. 77.
THE DIVINE WIFE.

The remarkable influence exercised by this dominion of Amon shows itself in another direction, in the oracles given by him; we meet with these declarations of the will of Amon as early as the beginning of the New Kingdom, when, contrary to all precedent, he appointed Princess Hatshepsut successor to the throne. During the following centuries this institution appears to have further developed, and we find the gods interfering in the doings of mankind. Under Ramses II. a high official and ambassador of the king erected a memorial to Isis because she had prophesied of him while he was *the great one of the Matoi*, that he should rise still higher. If I understand rightly, he was taking part in a procession among the princes when the sacred image in its bark halted before him and bowed to him,[2] and in a letter which must date from the end of the twentieth

[1] Ä. Z., 35. 24.

[2] Petrie, *Koptos*, Pl. XX.

dynasty we read that *the writings are laid before this great god, that he may judge them with fair justice.*[1] But it was in this decadent period in Egypt, with which we are now concerned, that the oracle in Thebes became the supreme dispenser of advice and judgment. When it was found necessary to fetch wood from Lebanon to repair the temple barks, Amon said to the high-priest, "*send me,*" and a figure of the god specially adapted for such a journey, the *Amon of the roads*, was dispatched in charge of a temple official.[2] Should a person of high standing wish to arrange for the future disposal of his property, the god would graciously accord him a command: *Thus saith Amon-Re, the great god, the great primeval being; this landed property* which belongs to N. is acquired in such a manner, and situated in such a place —it is all carried on actively—*I establish it to his son . . . and whoever removes this decree,* which is placed in the temple, *he is a fool and far from altering my word. I will immediately be furious against him. . . . I will plunge him in misery; his heritage shall belong to another, and his eyes shall see it. He shall fall on his knees before his enemy* (?), *his wife shall be carried off when he is by*—and all this shall happen to him because he *hath transgressed this command to which I have nodded.*[3]

For the recall of exiles, banished during some political upheaval, the oracle was made use of thus: On a feast day there was brought out *the Majesty of this glorious god, Lord of the gods, Amon-Re, he came into the great court of the Amon temple and seated himself there. . . .* Then offerings were made to him and *he was greeted,* and the high-priest laid before him how those unfortunates were banished from the oasis, and how that the god might forbid further banishments from the oasis, and how this decree might be inscribed on a memorial tablet, and to each request *the great god nodded greatly, greatly.*[4]

In another case, Thutmosis, one of the special priests of Amon, lay under strong suspicion of having embezzled from the granaries of the god. On the morning of a festival when the god is to be borne in his bark (p. 50) *upon the silver floor of the*

[1] Papyrus de Turin, 126. 3.

[2] Golenischeff, *Recueil de travaux*, xxi.; Ä. Z. 38. 1.

[3] Ä. Z., 35. 12 *et seq.*

[4] Brugsch, *Reise nach der grossen Oase*, Pl. 22.

house of Amon, two sentences are written up in his vicinity. One reads thus: "*Amon-Re, king of the gods, my good lord! it is said, Thutmosis, this superintendent of property, possesses something that is missing.* The other runs: *Oh, Amon-Re, king of the gods, my good lord! It is said, Thutmosis, this superintendent of property, possesses nothing that is missing.*" The high-priest then inquires of the god whether *he will judge with fair judgment. The great god assents fully and the two documents are read out before the great god. The great god selects the one which runs:* "*Oh, Amon-Re, king of the gods, my good lord! it is said, Thutmosis, this superintendent of property, possesses nothing that is missing.*" This is done once more, and again the god chooses the acquitting sentence. On a subsequent day the high-priest lays before the god orally another matter of which Thutmosis is accused, and at each petition, the god, if I rightly understand, pronounces an acquittal. By this means Thutmosis at length obtains a general pardon, and finally the god is pressed to instal Thutmosis in the office of *a divine father of Amon, a superintendent of estates, superintendent of the granaries, chief scribe of the commands of Amon* and *overseer of the archives of the granaries of the estates of Amon*, and to these propositions also *the great god assented.* We may hope that he never had occasion to regret his consent.[1]

We thus find a theocracy in its most absurd form established at Thebes; it took the place of a moribund government, and there is no doubt that the more powerful rulers of later times put an end to it, although the external forms of the rule of Amon continued even into the Persian period. When we examine into the history of the Egyptian religion in foreign lands we shall see how this theocracy struck even deeper root in another part of the world where it was transplanted.

Before we leave this period of transition, another phenomenon must be considered which becomes specially apparent at this time, although its beginnings belong to an early period: the murderer of Osiris was at last overtaken by his punishment. For thousands of years the Egyptians had quietly accepted the fact that Set had murdered Osiris, and had unjustly brought an

[1] Naville, *Inscription Historique de Pinodjem*, III.

action against him, and, nevertheless, had continued to include him among the gods. Indeed, during the latter half of the New Kingdom his cult received new life owing to his being considered the same as the Hyksos god Sutekh and to the circumstance of Sethos, who was named after him, obtaining the throne. But the evil character fastened on him by the legend still made itself felt, and when King Sethos constructed his great rock tomb, it did not appear befitting that the name of Set should appear in those chambers ruled over by Osiris, god of the dead; the king therefore arranged that in his own grave he should not be called Sethos, *he of Set*, but *he of Osiris*. It was not long before the popular dislike of Set rose to such a pitch that a man writing his detested name would himself erase it.[1] Finally, his figure and name were erased from the temple reliefs, for the ancient god had become a devil, the enemy of all the gods: he had taken over the *rôle* hitherto played by the storm-dragon Apophis.

Any one who had followed the Egyptian religion up to this point would naturally imagine that it was hastening to final decay and a speedy end, and that the nation itself was powerless and out of date, a prey for foreign aggressors. And yet the ancient nation roused itself once more, and the religion was endued with new life; a renewed youth it cannot be called.

Towards the end of the eighth century we find marked symptoms of a reaction in the ideas of the people. Until then the reign of Ramses II. had been looked upon as the culminating period of Egypt's greatness, and served as a model in external matters, but now the Old Kingdom came into vogue as the ideal to be followed. Everywhere in Upper Egypt where Ethiopian kings were paramount, as well as with their neighbours, the princes of Sais, we find this same endeavour; and when Egypt once more became a flourishing state under the house of Psammetichus, this tendency was so strong that looking at the monuments produced at this time we might well imagine ourselves back in the Old Kingdom. It seems as though the ancient nation was struggling after its lost youth, when it lived apart undisturbed by any foreign aggression, that time to the

[1] This is seen on the twenty-second dynasty papyrus at Berlin.

magnificence of which the pyramids bore witness. But, however pathetic this search after a dreamed-of ideal may appear, the way in which it asserted itself had an unsound element. From the first the imitation assumed the character of learned antiquarianism, men wrote in the language of the Old Kingdom and employed its orthography, which was fully two thousand years out of date; the modern population was represented in the antique costume, and the contemporaries of Psammetichus were given the titles and names of the court of Kheops.

By this reversion to the Old Kingdom, religion received fresh impetus, and it pervaded the entire life of the nation as its sole purpose to a degree it had never done before, so that the Egyptians were termed *the most pious of all men* [1] and became the wonder of their Greek contemporaries. They carefully ob-

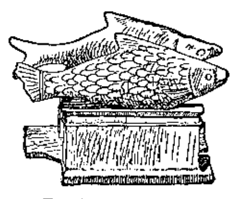


FIG. 78. SACRED FISH. (Berlin, 2750.)

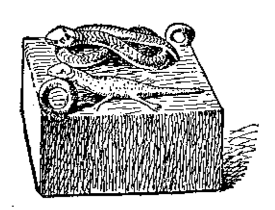


FIG. 79. SACRED SNAKE AND ICHNEUMON. (Berlin, 8846.)

served all the ancient customs, which characterized them as exclusive followers of the ancient gods, and distinguished them from the foreigners, whom they now looked upon with contempt. With what eagerness all the deities were worshipped by the people is shown by the innumerable bronze figures of gods and of temple furniture which at this time were dedicated in the temples by the poorer people, and of which our museums are full. It was the strange side of the Egyptian belief, such as the worship of animals, that developed most strongly during this phase in the minds of the people. The great time had arrived for sacred snakes, birds, rams and cats: they were petted by the people, and it was a meritorious work to provide for their burial. By far the most popular was Apis, the bull of the temple of Ptah of Memphis; at his death the pious wear mourning garments,

[1] Herodotus, II. 37.

and *nothing but water and vegetables enter their mouths* for fully sixty days, till his burial is accomplished.[1] Pilgrimages were made to his grave, and gravestones were erected inscribed with the interesting biography of this bull; when he was born, when *he was brought into the temple of Ptah*, and what was *the entire length of his life;* we are also told what place it was that had the honour of being his home, and the name of his mother. His burial was conducted with fullest observances, for the State itself provided for it. As Psammetichus I. informs us in the year 612: *in the temple of thy Father Apis . . . age had seized upon*

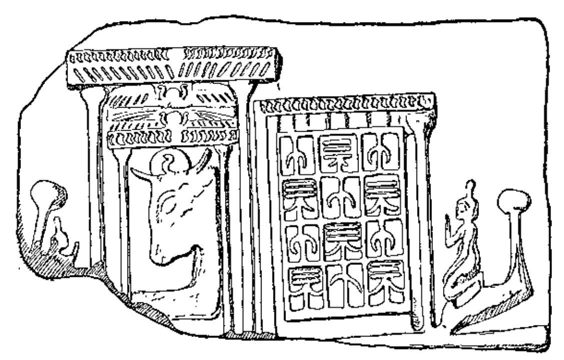


FIG. 80. THE DEAD APIS ON A BIER, IN A SHIP, MOURNED BY ISIS AND NEPHTHYS. (Berlin, 7494.)

his coffins, therefore his Majesty commanded that his temple should be repaired, that it should be more beautiful than it had been before. His Majesty caused all to be done that is done for a god on the day of burial and all the officials performed their parts. The body was embalmed with oil, with wrappings of finest linen and the garments of every god. His coffins were of ked wood, mer wood, cedar, and the most choice of all woods.[2] In the year 547 King Amasis, the light-hearted patron of the Greeks, surpassed everything that had been done hitherto for Apis, *because he loved Apis more than any other king. He made him a great sarcophagus of red granite, which his Majesty had found, such as never has been made of stone, by any king or at any time. And*

[1] *Receuil de Travaux*, 21. 63; 22. 176.
[2] *ib.* 22, 166.

he fitted him out with bandages, and amulets and all adornments of gold and all precious stones; they were more beautiful than any that had ever been made before.[1] This was the first of those colossal sarcophagi which we now regard with wonder in the Apis graves at Sakkara, formed of a single block of granite, four metres in length, and over three metres high.

In other ways also the Saite kings vied with each other in their devotion to the gods; they commenced lavish buildings, and provided immense revenues for the sanctuaries, especially at the new residence of the king at Sais, where the local goddess Neith now rose into great prominence. These Pharaohs also restored all the monuments of ancient piety, from the pyramids and temples to the ancient wooden tablet, *of the work of the ancestors, which the worms had eaten away*, and which was now replaced by a basalt tablet.[2] Priestly orders that had long disappeared, were once more reinstated, and to read an inscription of this late time with the endless titularies of the priests fills us with amazement at the way in which all these details were revived.

The ancient religious literature which had been lying neglected in the libraries of the temples were now sought out, and thus many ideas which had long been forgotten were once more brought to light. Even if most of this newly-acquired wisdom did not actually penetrate among the people, yet the jumble which already existed in the official religion was increased by it, surely a most unnecessary addition. But the theologians of the late period hailed with delight this addition to their religious possessions, for they could not have enough of these sacred matters. To have them all collected and arranged must have been a source of the greatest pleasure to these scholars. I say, must have been, for their own works are lost to us, and it is only from what was left behind them, by their successors the priests of the Greek period, that we can gain an idea of the wisdom of this moribund Egyptian nation. In the writings and temple inscriptions of the following centuries we find lists which give the names and titles of all the gods. On the temple walls we find records which show us how these sacred affairs were managed in

[1] *Recueil de Travaux*, 22. 20. [2] Ä. Z., 39, pl. 1-2.

each province. Notwithstanding its very different form, Lower Egypt was divided into the same number of nomes as Upper Egypt, and in some respects there was a remarkable similarity between all these nomes: a god and a relic of Osiris, a high-priest and high-priestess, a sacred ship, a sacred tree, and a sacred snake, an inundated land and a swamp. And all of these had special ancient names which a man must know, and also he must know the dates of the great festivals, and what was forbidden in them. What pleasure there was in ascertaining all these details and grouping them together, and what useful knowledge it was!

It was not only details from the actual ancient religion, and the actual ancient cults, which were thus collected and revived; but it is evident that anything was accepted that was old and strange, no inquiry of any length was made into its origin, or whether it had ever been really accepted. Offshoots of magic such as strange compound forms of different gods were admitted into the religion,[1] and also deliberate jests were not disdained. Because the gods are often represented as birds—Horus as a hawk, Nekhbet as a vulture, Thoth as an ibis—a bird form can be given to the great gods of each nome. Therefore Khnum is a hawk with the head of a ram, Wepwawet a jackal-headed sparrow. Bast is a cat-headed hawk, and so forth, while in addition each of these heads has its own proper crown.



FIG. 81. KHNUM AS A HAWK. Temple of Dendera.

These examples show sufficiently how this later Egyptian theology was constituted. Here everything that was old was worthy of honour and of resuscitation, while it can itself have produced little that was new.

Out of this esteem for the ancient wisdom there arose the veneration manifested at this late time for those who had been leaders of the nation in the primitive period. They had previously been looked upon as people of renown, now some of them were regarded as demigods, or even as gods.

Among them is Imhotep, a man who belonged to the court of

[1] In El Khargeh: Hoskins, *Visit to the Great Oasis*, pl. viii.

Zoser, one of the earliest of the kings of Egypt, and who was remembered by the people as the celebrated royal architect and as the author of ancient literature. But now it became known that he was no son of man, but a son of Ptah of Memphis, born to him by one Khroti-onkh. He was the patron of all who like himself dealt with learning and the secret arts. Before the scribe dipped his pen in the water-jar he poured out a few drops as a libation to Imhotep,[1] the physician venerated him as patron of their science, and the people finally accepted him wholly as a god of medicine, Asklepios as the Græco-Egyptians called him. For a long time after this the new deity bore obvious signs of his human origin; he was represented clothed in the ancient garments of man, of antique fashion, without crown or sceptre, or the beard worn by the gods; and his cult still retained the forms of the worship of the dead, as they were performed in the tombs of people of rank.

In the same way there also developed divine honours paid to an exalted personage of the New Kingdom. At the culminating period of Egypt's glory the highest place at the brilliant court of Amenophis III. was held by the vizier Amenophis, son of Hapu. He tells us himself in his inscription that he was a learned man: *he was shown all the sacred books and beheld the excellencies of Thoth;* he undertook their secrets, and on their account men came to him for counsel.[2] And he was not only learned, but he also achieved great things in his high office and earned the gratitude of his lord. The king set up his statue in the temple at Karnak, and when his tomb on the west bank of Thebes was completed his Majesty appeared in person and issued a decree intended to maintain the mortuary revenues of his vizier to all time. We do not know the exact reason why

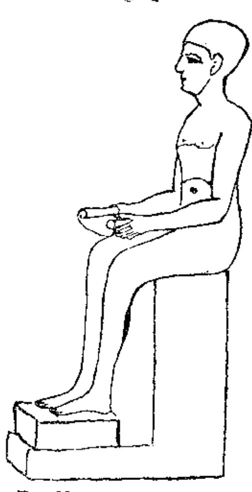


FIG. 82. THE WISE IMHOTEP. (Hilton Price Collection.)

[1] Schäfer, Ä. Z., 36. 147.

[2] Mariette, *Karnak*, 36. 28.

the name of this official survived through many thousands of years, but he was regarded in late times as one of the wise men of the past, a man, as we learn from a Greek source,[1] *who on account of his wisdom appeared to share in the divine nature.* A book of magic was ascribed to him, and his grave became a sacred place. Finally Ptolemy IV. completed it as a temple to the gods of the dead, the well-known small temple of Deir el Medineh, which, owing to its good preservation, even now affords pleasure to the modern visitor to Thebes. In it the old sage *whose sayings do not pass away,* and Imhotep were worshipped in company with the gods; in Karnak also he enjoyed divine honours.

We have given here a very scanty sketch of the later religion, and, had we only Egyptian sources to rely on, it would be difficult to follow it farther. While there is so much in the inscriptions and papyri of this epoch relating to the gods and their cults, we nevertheless learn little from them regarding the actual belief of this time. They are reproductions of extremely ancient ideas, and it would be a hazardous enterprise to attempt to discover which of them all were actually believed at this period.

But here, where our Egyptian sources fail us, we receive for the first time help from outside: about 450 B.C. Herodotus, an indefatigable and careful observer, travelled in Egypt. He observed exactly those things which are of special interest to us, for he was convinced that these Egyptian gods were no other than his own. Osiris and Isis are in his eyes Dionysos and Demeter, Horus is Apollo, Set, the enemy of the gods, is the gigantic Typhon, Neith of Sais is Athene, Min is Pan, and Amon Zeus, while even the cat-headed Bast must reconcile herself to being Artemis. As may be expected at that time, Isis and Osiris form in his eyes the central points of the religion; they are the gods worshipped by all Egyptians.[2] He is proudly conscious that a glimpse into the mysteries of the priests was afforded him, even while he is faithful to his vow to divulge none of them.[3]

[1] Manetho, in Josephus c. Apionem, I. 232.
[2] Herodotus, II. 42. [3] *ib.* 61.

The sacred animals struck him very greatly; the immense consideration paid to them is well conveyed to us in his description. He saw Apis in a court in front of the southern gateway of the temple of Ptah, and knows that he was engendered by means of a ray of light from heaven; that he is black, and has a square mark on the forehead: on his back is a figure of an eagle, and other signs by which he is recognized. When a new Apis is discovered, the whole of Egypt celebrates the event with holiday garb and festivals.[1] The Phœnix, the sacred bird in the temple at Heliopolis, he did not see, for, as he was informed by the priests there, it makes its appearance only once in 500 years to bring the body of its father to the temple in an egg made of myrrh.[2] At the Lake of Moeris and in Upper Egypt he was shown a sacred crocodile, whose ears and fore-feet were ornamented with gold and precious stones.[3]

But it was not only these single examples who inhabited the temples, served by attendants and petted by the pious, who were looked upon as gods; their sacred character had long extended to their relatives, to cows and goats, to cats and dogs, hippopotami and crocodiles, rats and mice, hawks and ibis, perch and eels. In a conflagration the rescue of the cats is of more importance than putting out the fire.[4] He who is eaten by a crocodile is considered to be supremely fortunate in his death;[5] he, however, who intentionally kills a sacred animal has forfeited his own life, and in the case of an ibis or a hawk, even accidental murder is looked upon as a capital offence.[6]

For each of these creatures there is a locality to which its body must be conveyed when it chances to die; the skeleton of the cat is brought to Bubastis, the bodies of the mouse and sparrow-hawk to Buto, and that of the ibis to Eshmunen.[7] If a bull dies, he is buried outside the town, leaving his horns projecting above ground to mark the place; for there are pious people from Atarbekhis in the Delta, who travel about the country to collect the bones of bulls, and bury them at home.

[1] Herodotus, 153; III., 27. 28.
[2] *ib.* II., 73.
[3] *ib.* 69.
[4] *ib.* 66.
[5] *ib.* 90.
[6] *ib.* 65.
[7] *ib.* 67.

The cows, however, which are considered the most sacred of all animals, are not buried thus; they are thrown into the Nile.[1] In these facts, where he might very well be suspected as exaggerating, Herodotus is certainly correct, for everywhere in Egypt we find such late cemeteries of sacred animals, pits into which the cats are thrown by hundreds of thousands, vaults where full-grown crocodiles, their eggs, and even young ones recently hatched are buried, and graves for ibis and hawks, for serpents and fishes. These animals are not always buried off-hand, in many cases they have been most carefully mummified and placed in coffins, jars, or bronze figures. They are laid in such immense numbers in these graves, that modern industry has discovered a profane use for their bodies: the bodies of the cats at Beni Hasan have been utilized to afford excellent manure.

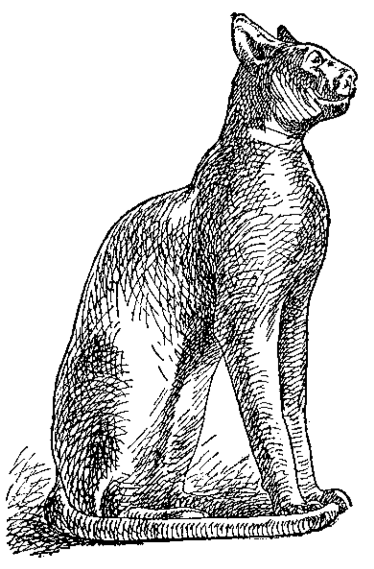


FIG. 83. BRONZE COFFIN OF A CAT. (Berlin, 2055.)

Herodotus also attended festivals in the great temples of the Delta, which have now vanished, though the fame of their magnificence and beauty still survives. His descriptions show that at this time also they consisted principally of representations from the legends of the gods. At Sais, within the precincts of the temple of Neith, there was a grave of Osiris, surrounded by a grove with obelisks. Near it was a round lake, and here the passion of Osiris was represented.[2] At another feast a priest with his eyes bound, and wearing a garment specially woven, is brought to the road leading to the Isis temple. Two wolves—obviously the Wepwawet gods—lead him there, and accompany him back again.[3] Here and elsewhere, where Isis

[1] Herodotus, II. 41. [2] *ib.* 170. 171. [3] *ib.* 122.

and Osiris are in question, Herodotus does not give the reason for such performances, possibly from a feeling of awe. But of other gods he speaks more freely. When the god whom he calls Herakles once desired greatly to behold Amon, he only showed himself to him wearing the ram's head. At the festival of Amon, therefore, the Thebans slaughter a ram, clothe the statue of Amon with the skin of the creature, and place the statue of Herakles in front of it; they then beat themselves and forthwith bury the ram.[1] At Papremis in the Delta the god whom Herodotus calls Ares once forced his way with violence into his mother's sanctuary in order to gain possession of her as his wife. Therefore the statue of the god is taken out of the temple on

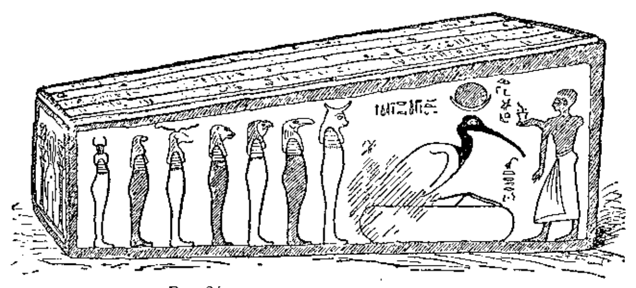


FIG. 84. WOODEN COFFIN OF AN IBIS.
Before him, the man who provided for his burial is offering incense.
(Berlin, 6938.)

the evening before the festival. At sundown the priests bring it back on a four-wheeled cart, but find more than a thousand men armed with clubs stationed at the door, to prevent the entrance of the god into the temple. The votaries of the god fight hard and obtain an entrance for him.[2] In other cases besides this we find that the people took a greater part in the festivals than we should imagine judging merely from the temple inscriptions. There was one night in Sais, indeed throughout Egypt, when there was a general illumination, when lamps were placed round the outside of the houses.[3] At the festival of Osiris the women wander about singing songs to the god to the accompaniment of a flute, and carrying statues of him which have movable phalli.[4] And at the great festival at Bubastis 700,000 people

[1] Herodotus, II. 42.
[2] *ib.* 63. [3] *ib.* 62. [4] *ib.* 42.

stream into the town from all parts: *men and women sail together, and on every ship there is a great crowd of them. Many of the women have castanets which they play, many of the men play the flute throughout the whole voyage, and the remainder of the men and women sing and clap their hands. When they arrive at a town they moor the ship. Some part of the women continue to act as I have said, and others shout insults to the women of the place, and others dance, and others raise their dresses high. So they do at every town which lies on the banks. When they arrive at Bubastis, they celebrate the feast with large offerings, and more wine is consumed at this feast than in all the rest of the year.*[1]



FIG. 85. BAST, recognizable by her cats and basket; monkeys are scrambling on her shoulders. By her side another is playing the flute. (Berlin, 12424.)

In the ceremonial of the sacrifices also the people took part, although perhaps under the superintendence of the priests. One of these—surely the ancient we'b (p. 54)—first examined the bull to be sacrificed; if he had no black hair, if the hair of the tail was properly grown, and the tongue showed nothing that was proscribed, he would affix a seal to his horns and declare him to be pure.[2] *The animal thus marked is led to the altar, where the sacrifice is to be offered, and a fire is lighted. Wine is then poured upon it, and the god invoked, the bull is slain and the head cut off. The men then flay the body, but they heap curses upon the head . . . and hope that if any ill is about to befall themselves or Egypt, it may fall upon this head.*[3] On this account the Egyptians will not eat of any head; in towns where Greeks are living, they are sold to them; in other places the head is thrown into the river.

In this avoidance of the head of the sacrificial animal, there is surely something foreign to the Egyptian ideas, for in early

[1] Herodotus, II. 60. [2] *ib.* 38. [3] *ib.* 39.

times the head and haunch of young bulls were the joints selected to lay upon all tables of offerings. Also the partial burning of the offering[1] was certainly an innovation, brought into Egypt by foreigners. It is true that the earlier Egyptians sought to supply the deity with provisions by means of burning, but this was only in exceptional cases, perhaps for a god who tarried far off, but now the burnt-offering had become a regular part of the temple ceremonial. Whence the later Egyptians had acquired this custom is shown by its name—glil—which is Canaanitish.

It must have been due to foreign influence that the oracle, that played so important a part in the Greek world at this time, was also thoroughly established on the banks of the Nile. Herodotus knew of no fewer than seven gods in Egypt who spake by oracles. Of these, the most reliable was considered to be that of Buto in the town of the same name.[2] The gods also give an intimation of their intentions by means of remarkable events. These are carefully observed by the Egyptians, who write down what follows upon these prodigies.[3] They also consider that the fate of a person is fixed by the day of his birth, for every day belongs to a special god.[4] In every way they are more religious than other nations,[5] to whom, however, they imparted many of their customs and ideas. This is the case with circumcision, which they were the first to introduce, from motives of cleanliness,[6] and again with their abhorrence of swine,[7] which must have been connected with the wounding of Horus by Set in the form of *a black pig*,[8] and finally and chiefly in their reverence for the cow, which was never eaten or sacrificed, because thus Isis of the cow's horns would be injured. *On this account no Egyptian man or woman would kiss a Greek or use his knife, his spit for roasting, nor his cauldron, nor would he eat the flesh of a (otherwise) pure ox, which had been cut with a Greek knife.*[9]

The priests naturally are even more stringently exclusive than the laity, and have to observe the *countless usages*.

[1] Herodotus, II. 40. [2] *ib.* 83. 133. 153. [3] *ib.* 82.
[4] *ib.* 82; see also page 163. [5] *ib.* 37. [6] *ib.* 36. 37. [7] *ib.* 47.
[8] Totenbuch, ch. 112. [9] Herodotus, 41.

They inherit their offices from their fathers,[1] and receive daily a generous supply of bread, beef, geese and wine. Fish is prohibited and they may not even see beans.[2] They must wash themselves twice during the night and twice in the day, they must shave their heads every day, and the whole body every third day. According to ancient custom they wear sandals of papyrus and linen clothes—woollen ones are abhorrent to the gods.[3]

In reading these descriptions at the present day it is obvious that the Greek traveller entertained that feeling of respect for the Egyptians which was necessarily aroused by their extremely ancient civilization, but that he regarded this religious nation very much as we to-day consider the Chinese or the natives of India. To him the Egyptians appeared as the survivors of a bygone phase of humanity. They regarded other nations round them with narrow-minded contempt as unclean, and not so intimate with the gods as they themselves. In the new life pulsating in the world around them they neither could nor would take their share, but they still desired to pursue their life in the service and under the care of their gods. So long as this was permitted them, they cared little for anything else.

All the various rulers, who followed upon the downfall of the Saite rulers in Egypt, endeavoured therefore to maintain a good footing with the priests as the special representatives of the nation. Even Kambyses, whose madness had at first so deeply injured the Egyptians (he had actually slain the Apis bull with added insults), had not been able entirely to ignore this religious faction; and they possessed a remarkably able representative who was close to his person, in the body-physician Uza-hor-res-net. He knew at any rate how to gain his interest for Sais; he had *shown his Majesty how great is Sais . . . and how great is the temple of Neith,* and had instructed him in all the sanctuaries of Sais. He contrived that the Persian king in Sais *himself entered into the temple of Neith and threw himself down before his mistress, as every king had done; he brought also a great offering of all good things to the great Neith, mother of the gods, and of the great gods of Sais, as*

[1] Herodotus, II. 37. [2] *ib* 37. [3] *ib.* 81.

every glorious king had done. And when Uza-hor-res-net informed Kambyses that all manner of foreigners lived upon the ground and pavement of the temple, and that their presence was an abomination to the pious Egyptians, the Persian king did what the native kings had not done, he commanded that the houses of the foreigners should be destroyed, and ordered them to settle outside the boundary walls of the temple area.

Under Darius also the body-physician played his part successfully: as a physician he proved to him *how excellent is this art* of Egyptian medicine *in order to keep every sufferer in life;* the king sent him to Egypt that he might once more establish in Sais *the House of Life,* as the school of the priests was called, the former seat of medical learning. This he did, and fitted out the school with all the books and appliances which, according to ancient writings, they had once possessed. Thus Uza-hor-res-net, in the *midst of the very great misfortune which had overtaken the whole land,* forwarded the interests of Egypt, and if he also contrived to restore his kindred to their priestly offices, and to enrich them with landed property by the favour of the Persian king, he would be readily forgiven by his fellow-countrymen.[1]

The Egyptian dynasts, contemporaries of the Persian conquerors, did all they could to secure assistance for the religion of the country. The piety of the two Pharaohs of the fourth century, whom we, in common with the Greeks, call Nektanebus, is manifest in all parts of the country. However uncertain their political status might be—the Persians had, in fact, subjugated them—the building of temples was carried on by them, as though the ancient supremacy of the Pharaohs were as unquestioned as it had been in the time of Amenophis and Ramses.[2] The hardest and most costly material was employed for these buildings, and to build a temple entirely of the red granite of Assuan, as was done by Nektanebus I. in his native town of Behbet, was a feat unparalleled even among the Egyptians, skilled architects as they were.

In the inscriptions of this king also we find the same anxiety to continue in favour with the priesthood. At Abydos the

[1] Statue in Vatican; for the latter part see Schäfer, Ä. Z., 37. 72.
[2] Berlin, 14399.

faithful had taken offence, because stone had been taken from the hills surrounding the sacred town, for some building. As a result of that complaint Nektanebus I. issued a decree in the year 378 that any malefactor guilty of further insult to the hills should be hewn to pieces. Also when Nektanebus II. came to the throne in 361 B.C. he immediately showed his great love for the gods of his country, and hatred of foreigners. His predecessor had of necessity levied a tax of ten per cent. on all imports and manufactures, and Nektanebus himself was in no position to forego it. But two important items of this he assigned to Neith for her offerings: the tax on the imports from the Greek seas and that obtained from the artisans of the Greek town of Naukratis.[1] If a Pharaoh of the fourth century found it impossible to dispense with these active, industrious and skilful foreigners, if he could not prevent their settling on the sacred soil of Egypt, they should at least pay a penalty to the gods. What hatred to the foreigners on the part of the pious Egyptian is shown here! But it was a powerless, senile hatred, fated soon to perish. A few more years, and these same priests bowed themselves humbly before the Greek rulers of the country.

[1] Ä. Z., 38. 133.

CHAPTER VIII

BELIEFS REGARDING THE DEAD, AT THE LATE PERIOD

As the Egyptians of the decadent period clung to their ancient religious traditions, as though by them only could prosperity be secured, so also in their funerary practices they endeavoured to imitate and retain all that previous centuries had contrived for the welfare of the departed. All kinds of funerary literature that had ever existed was sought out and placed with the dead, either on papyri or in the endless inscriptions on the coffins and tombs. The pyramid texts (p. 88) which had almost fallen into oblivion since the Old Kingdom, once more re-appeared; the texts of the Book of the Dead were embodied in a codex, for which a papyrus roll, very nearly twenty metres in length, was required; the chapters of the Voyage of the Sun were introduced with their usual illustrations on the great stone sarcophagi. And to all this ancient literature smaller books were now added, which claimed to be ancient, although many of them were certainly of recent fabrication. Among them was the lament of Isis and Nephthys over their brother Osiris, which we have already quoted in part (p. 33); there was the Book of Breathings, which was specially popular in Thebes; there was the lament over Sokaris, the ritual of embalming, the Book of the conquest of Apophis, and many others. There must have been much of the early literature which was incomprehensible at this time, for most of the texts were distorted to the verge of meaninglessness; but it was precisely this that made them appear so mysterious, and at this period mystery and incomprehensibility were considered to be the distinguishing marks of what was sacred and venerable.

The royal tombs of the late period are lost to us, but the

graves of rich private personages afford abundant proof of the way in which obligations to the dead were fulfilled at this time. They exceed in grandeur all earlier graves. Not one of the royal tombs of Thebes can vie with the tomb of a certain Petamenope, who lived in Thebes during the Saitic period, and, according to old custom, called himself a *chief Kherheb*. We enter this tomb through two forecourts, with large gateways, behind which are two chambers supported by columns cut out of the cliffs, and we then reach a double line of passages, halls and chambers. At the end of one of these we come upon a mass of rock fifteen metres in length and ten metres wide, and in the form of an immense sarcophagus. This indicates the place beneath which the dead man lay. To reach the place it is necessary to descend a shaft leading from one of the earlier chambers, to cross three rooms, and then to descend another shaft. This opens into a chamber behind which is situated the great hall, where the sarcophagus once stood.

The graves of this period which survive at Gizeh and Sakkara are contrived with equal skill. Their superstructure has now disappeared, but the most important part is still there, the deep, wide shaft, at the bottom of which the sarcophagus stands like an independent edifice. No doubt the arrangements of these graves contain weighty mysteries; some may be models of the under-world, while others represent the grave of Osiris in the shaft of Ro-Setau.

The decoration of these tombs is, of course, of a religious character, and is borrowed from the mortuary literature. In many graves, also, there are series of scenes of daily life, which we hail with joy, as we possess elsewhere nothing of any sort to illustrate the daily life and occupations of the late period. But our delight is of short duration, for these pictures of the slaughter of sacrificial animals, or the offering of birds, with their accompanying inscriptions, are copied from some grave of the Old Kingdom; in the case of the remarkable series of handicrafts in the grave of Aba at Thebes, we can actually recognize the original source from which they were copied by the later artist. He copied them from a tomb in Middle Egypt of a man of the same name, Aba, of the seventh dynasty.

Possibly the later Aba believed that he had discovered an ancestor in the namesake of ancient days, and therefore had his tomb copied from the early one. It was the antiquarianism of the period that painted these pictures, the same tendency that also dominated religion and art.

The magnificence of the Saite tombs corresponds with that of their coffins. For people of rank, dark granite or black basalt was considered necessary, and frequently they are positive marvels of technical skill. Some are of mummy form, as was customary from the time of the New Kingdom, while others are made in imitation of the box-like coffins of the earlier times, but all are distinguished by a characteristic peculiarity. On the ancient stone coffins there is little to read, but on the later

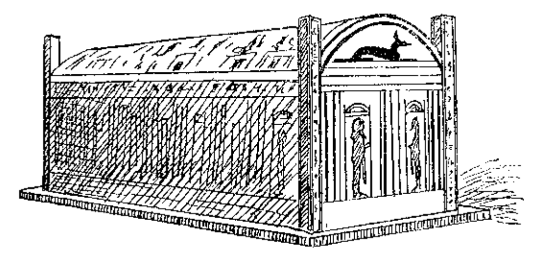


FIG. 86. COFFIN, WITH POSTS, OF THE LATE PERIOD. (Berlin, 8497.)

ones the Egyptians considered it indispensable to inscribe whole chapters of the mortuary books with their illustrations. They must have been aware that by doing this they damaged the appearance of these costly monuments, but it was of supreme importance that the dead shall have the sacred texts provided for them in imperishable materials. How great was the demand for such stone sarcophagi is shown by the fact that means were found for securing them for people who could not themselves pay for them. For them some early grave was plundered of its coffin, the inscription erased, and another substituted in keeping with the demand of the time. For this purpose even broken and damaged fragments were used, and if a coffin was fitted with a cover which did not belong to it, it was considered of no importance.

The men who could not aspire to a stone coffin would

frequently have one made in the form of a box, and, moreover, of the special form which the coffin of Osiris must once have been made: a box with four corner-posts which stood up above the curved cover. On these posts were placed four sparrow-hawks of the ancient form, and on the cover itself a jackal was laid with its tail hanging down over the coffin: these coloured wooden figures represented the gods who succoured Osiris. At the head and foot of the coffin were figures of Isis and Nephthys lamenting the dead husband; while Anubis stands by, holding the symbol of Osiris, or weeping, and wiping his jackal eyes.

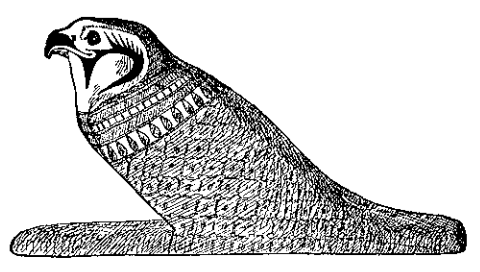


FIG. 87. HAWK, FROM A COFFIN. (Berlin, 4687.)

In the inner coffin, on the mummy, figures were laid of a flying scarab, of the four sons of Horus (p. 129), of the goddess of heaven, and all the small amulets which had ever been invented in Egypt. The greater the number of these things the dead possessed, the better it was for him, and they were made as dainty and costly as possible. Under the head of the mummy was laid a linen disc, painted with weird figures (fig. 89); this ensured to the deceased a sight of the sun. An Osiris figure was occasionally laid between the legs of the mummy; it was made of mud, and was filled with grains of corn, whose sprouting would typify the resurrection of the god. Also two fingers, carved in some dark stone, were provided for the deceased, a large model of a right eye in wax or in metal, a heron or ibis, and a variety of other things. As, however, it might befall the dead to be insufficiently supplied with such things, some provident people were also provided with stone



FIG. 88. JACKAL, FROM A COFFIN.



FIG. 89. DISC FOR HEAD. British Museum. (By permission of the Society of Biblical Archæology.)[1]

moulds, so that in case of need they could make more for themselves. The intestines were placed in a box, or more frequently, as in the New Kingdom, in four stone vases, the covers of which bore the heads of the four sons of Horus, and which, moreover, were placed under the protection of Isis, Nephthys, Neith and Selkis.

Of the other tomb furniture nothing was forgotten, or, more accurately, the amount was greatly increased. Thus many tombs at this time were supplied with a set of steps, which may probably have been intended to facilitate the passage of the soul up the shaft of the tomb, unless, in accordance with the ancient texts of the heavenly ladder (p. 96), it were intended for the climbing up into the firmament. In other tombs we find wooden standards surmounted by figures of sacred animals, as they were carried at the head of processions, in order *to prepare the road*.[2] The papyrus which was laid with the body was at this time enclosed in the pedestal at the foot of a wooden figure of Osiris, and the cover that closed the aperture was an imitation of the coffin of the god. Thus, as its sacred character demanded, the book was deposited in the very coffin of the god of death.

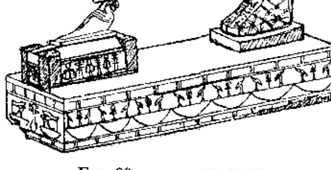
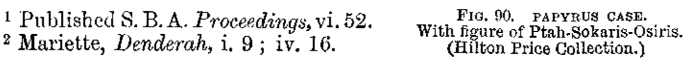
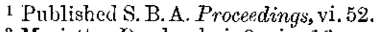


FIG. 90. PAPYRUS CASE. With figure of Ptah-Sokaris-Osiris. (Hilton Price Collection.)





1 Published S. B. A. *Proceedings*, vi. 52.
2 Mariette, *Denderah*, i. 9; iv. 16.

The most remarkable, however, of all these tomb requisites were the ushebti figures which, as we have already seen (p. 140), relieved the dead from all compulsory labour. Their sanctity is shown by an external feature: at this time they wear the special beard of the gods. The ordinary ones, made of bright blue faïence, were placed by hundreds in the graves, and in such numbers have they been found that there can be scarcely any small collection which does not include some of these late figures. The better kind also, carved with finished detail in limestone, in which the Egyptian workman of this period was specially adept, were provided in immense numbers; they were placed in niches in the walls of the tomb chamber, as the best possible assistants for its lord. In some cases the deceased had 365 ushebtis, so that each of these little men served him for one day in each year.[1]

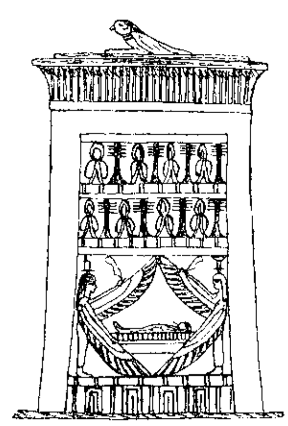


FIG. 91. SEPULCHRAL BOX. Wood, painted. Isis and Nephthys protecting a mummy, a figure of a mummied hawk on the lid. (Hilton Price Collection.)

It was only natural that what was done by the great and wealthy for the welfare of their souls should be copied as far as possible by lesser folk, and in the great burial places of this time burials and coffins of all kinds are to be found. The process of mummifying varied according to the price to be paid, and Herodotus states from personal observation that before undertaking the treatment of a body, the embalmers submitted to their customers wooden models of mummies, showing the three methods employed by them, with a corresponding scale of prices.[2]

The same business-like system prevailed among the people on whom devolved the guardianship of the graves, the successors of the old mortuary priests, whom we are accustomed to call by their Greek appellation of choachytæ. We have abundant remains, dating from the centuries of Greek dominion, referring

[1] At Abusir el Melek, from information supplied by Dr. Rubensohn.
[2] Herodotus, II. 86.

to the business transactions in the families of these people. We find from them that every dead body was actual capital for these guardians of the dead, and brought them a specified income. One of them had undertaken to perform certain specified prayers and offerings for Psenasychis, his wife and children, and in virtue of this drew a perpetual emolument; this occupation and salary were personal property, which he bequeathed to his children or sold to another member of the guild.[1] They could also borrow money on it, and it is possible that this gave rise to the extraordinary idea mentioned by Herodotus,[2] the oft-told tale that the Egyptians would pawn the very mummies of their fathers. However this may have been, we must be on our guard against drawing any conclusions from this statement, and from the business-like attitude of the choachytæ, as to the real sentiments entertained by the people with regard to their dead. We who look back at these things after an interval of two thousand years are constantly in danger of judging by such external evidence as survives to us from that far distant time. We see the tombs and their equipments, we see their professional guardians at their duties and their business, but if we wish to judge correctly of all this, we must take into account a side of which no inscriptions and no pictures tell us anything—that which Herodotus met with in Egypt, the loud wailing on the day of death, when the women cast earth on their heads, and ran through the town howling and smiting themselves; the quiet time of mourning, when the beard and hair were allowed to grow,[3] as though the mourners wished to distinguish themselves from the joyous world around them, and also the long, sad remembrance of which Herodotus says nothing.

On another point also we find that we must not form our judgment solely on the evidence afforded us by the graves. We have already seen that the Egyptians of this period held the ancient mortuary literature and customs in the highest esteem and observance. But while doing this, did they accept all the

[1] An instance of such a document is published in the handbook *Aus den Papyrus der Königl. Museum*, p. 103 *et seq.*

[2] Herodotus, II. 136. [3] *ib.* 85; 36.

ideas involved in these customs? In the many hundreds of years since the Book of the Dead or the Am Duat were compiled, had their conceptions regarding the destiny of the soul remained entirely unchanged? Certainly not, but owing to their determination to adhere strictly to tradition, we cannot trace the changes in the beliefs of the people. Also we cannot judge whether Herodotus was rightly informed when he asserts[1] that the Egyptians, who first of all mankind realized the immortality of the soul, also believed in a migration of the soul; that at death it entered upon another existence, which commenced immediately. After three thousand years, during which it had experienced all the various forms of life that exist on land, in the water and in the air, it would once more re-enter a human being. Had the ancient conception, according to which the soul could manifest itself as a bird or a flower, or *in every form that it desired*, finally developed into this form in the national faith? This idea must certainly have differed in some way from the account given of it by Herodotus, for had the people believed in such an unending succession of changes for the soul, they must have abandoned the belief in Osiris and his kingdom, and yet the care of souls was committed to

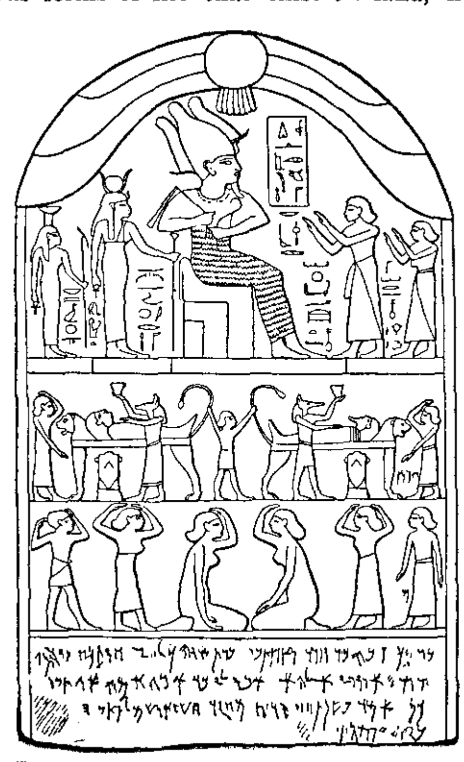


FIG. 92. GRAVESTONE OF A SYRIAN WOMAN, AKHET-ABU, OF MEMPHIS, 482 B.C. (Berlin, 7707.)

[1] Herodotus, II. 123.

this protector of the dead as long as the Egyptian religion itself endured.

We gain some slight knowledge of the popular beliefs of the late period from the gravestones of foreigners living in Egypt, who desired to be buried according to Egyptian methods. There were Syrians buried at Memphis in the fifth century whose gravestones were apparently of foreign workmanship, and bearing scenes which are not according to ancient Egyptian tradition. There we see how the deceased prayed before Osiris, how Anubis takes care of the mummy, and how the relatives mourn. In the Syrian inscription the son prays to Osiris for a *blessing* for his father. What is expressed by this scene and inscription must be, on the whole, the ideas held by the ordinary man of that time concerning death. The innumerable hopes and fears, all the spirits and deities, of which the old literature was full, must long previously have been abandoned and forgotten by the mass of the people.

CHAPTER IX

THE EGYPTIAN RELIGION IN ADJACENT COUNTRIES

BEFORE we pass on to consider the last phase of Egyptian religion we must pause for a moment to glance at its spread into neighbouring countries during the long period of its prime, and the influence it exercised on those countries.

The earliest trace of such influence has lately become known to us in Crete. On a stone vase, which dates from about the beginning of the twentieth century B.C., there is the representation of a festival celebrated in honour of a local god of harvest. The Cretan singers who are marching in this procession are led

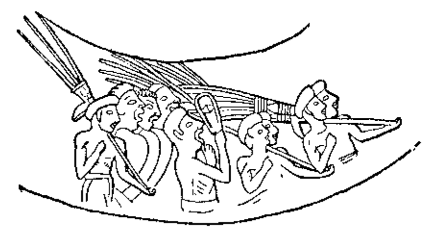


FIG. 93.
FROM AN ANCIENT CRETAN STONE VASE.

by a man who, as shown by his attire and his sistrum, is an Egyptian priest. Evidently he is officiating among the barbarians as a skilled musician.

Another trace is less certain. As we have seen, the ancient funerary cults of the Egyptians were based, primarily, on the idea that the dead must be fed by the survivors. This idea finds expression in the principal scene in all the tombs, where the deceased is represented eating his meals, either alone or with his wife. It can scarcely be a coincidence that in the tomb reliefs of northern Syria, which certainly date back to the

twentieth century, we find the same representation, and that the figure of the deceased eating his repast occurs also on Greek tomb reliefs. Again, the idea of burying the body in a coffin, or even in a double coffin for extra security, had a meaning for one nation only, who held that before all things it was necessary to preserve the body of the dead; this custom, wherever it is found in Europe, must consequently have been transplanted to the north from Egypt. The elaborate arrangements provided by the Egyptians for their dead would necessarily impress and influence other nations who had intercourse with them. Of course it remains very doubtful whether it resulted in anything more than a superficial acceptance of a foreign idea. It is quite possible that the northern nations modelled their gravestones and coffins according to Egyptian ideas without knowing anything of the kingdom of Osiris; and this remark applies to all that is found in Etruria, in Northern Africa, or even in Western Asia, that is Egyptian in character. When the Egyptian sign of life, the jackal-headed god, the winged sun, or the crowns of the gods are employed on monuments, it does not follow that the people who used them had any other reason for doing so than the supposition that symbols that satisfied the pious Egyptians would surely prove pleasing to their own gods.



FIG. 94. GRAVESTONE OF A SYRIAN QUEEN, FROM SENJIRLI. (Berlin.)

We will turn first to Palestine and Phœnicia, where we are on firm ground, for we know for certain that Egyptian cults existed there in certain localities up to the end of the New Kingdom. There the Pharaohs built temples to Amon, and for a time Egypt dominated everything; there Egyptian gods are figured on the seals, and even the tombs are painted after the fashion of Egypt.[1] But with these nations the foreign religion

[1] There is a fragment of such a tomb scene in the Kennard collection, London.

can never have really gained the supremacy over their national beliefs, nor over those which had previously reached them from Babylon; not even at the port of Byblos, which from primitive times onward had especially close intercourse with Egypt. As early as 1100 B.C. or thereabouts, when the Theban temple official, Wenamun, travelled to Byblos, to bring wood for a new ship for the temple, the fact that he had come as ambassador of Amon, and had brought a statue of him, made but small impression there. In



Fig. 95. Jewawmelek, King of Byblos, before the Goddess of Byblos.

vain did he announce that the father and grandfather of the prince of Byblos had regarded Amon as *their lord*, and that they *brought their lives to offer to him*, and that the prince himself was *a servant of the god*. The prince acknowledged all this without hesitation, and also added that Phœnicia had acquired art and *learning* from Egypt, but it did not concern him any longer, and as Amon had omitted to send any money, the desire of the god was nothing to him.[1] Undoubtedly much survived in Phœnicia for a long period that in externals was borrowed from the Egyptian religion, and even in 400 B.C. the people of Byblos represented the ancient goddess of their city[2] as a Hathor.

In the oases of the Sahara the Egyptian religion was supreme during the New Kingdom, for Amon, the god of this epoch, was the supreme god of their temples, and when in Egypt itself Amon gradually decreased in importance, the Libyans of the oases remained faithful to him, and from the fifth century his cult once more revived here to a remarkable degree. Under the Persian kings the building of a great temple in Khargeh was commenced and the temples of other oases also date from

[1] Ä. Z., 38. 1.
[2] Known to the Egyptians as early as the Middle Kingdom. Cf. Louvre, C. 43.

the latest times. But as the population of these oases had scarcely sufficient wealth to undertake such buildings on their own resources, we must suppose that the money for them was supplied from Egypt. It is possible that these mysterious temples hidden away in the desert were considered by the Egyptians to be especially sacred, and that therefore in late times they may have been employed in connection with the belief in oracles. It is certain that it was the case with the oasis of Jupiter Amon, the oasis that lies farthest from Egypt, and which is now called Siwa. The oracle of Amon which was situated there had an appreciative public in the Greek colonists of Cyrenaika who lived only a few days' journey from it, and who spread its fame throughout the Mediterranean world. From Asia Minor, Greece and Carthage his advice was sought, and a special stroke of good fortune must have rendered his fame yet more lofty.

When Alexander came to Egypt in the year 332, he was anxious to see the place, and he undertook that journey into the desert, which so greatly impressed the Greeks. When the high-priest greeted Alexander on his arrival according to Egyptian ideas as the son of the god, the king chose to regard it as more than a conventional phrase: to him it was an utterance of the god, which bestowed on him the dominion of the world. From this time forth the oracle of Jupiter Amon formed one of the great marvels of the ancient world, with its temple and its blazing sun, and while Amon in consequence was regarded more and more by the Greeks as Zeus—already the ancient coins of Cyrene represent him thus—the natives themselves adhered firmly to the Egyptian conception of him, the statue of Amon imparted his decisions exactly as it was done at Thebes, the temples were Egyptian temples, and in their graves the Ammonians depicted the scenes and texts of the Book of the Dead.

But by far the most appreciative soil and the richest development was found by the Egyptian religion where once it had been forced upon races of lowest culture and meanest endowments, the land of the Nubians and negroes.

When the Pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom conquered Nubia they left the people their god Dedwen, and associated with him the Egyptian cataract god Khnum. In the New Kingdom,

when conquest extended greatly to the south and Nubia was organized as a province under the rule of a vizier, the religion of Nubia was Egyptianized. The great gods of the Empire, Amon, Ptah, and Re Har-akhte, were introduced into the country with Isis and Hathor, and in addition to these the Nubians were given the Pharaohs themselves to worship as deities of the country. At Semneh the people were forced to worship Sesostris III., the first conqueror of their country, and also Thothmes III. who had recently conquered them.

At Soleb, Amenophis III. established himself as a god; at Abu Simbel, Ramses II. was enthroned with the gods in the holy of holies in the great temple, while in like manner his wife is worshipped in the smaller temple with Hathor.

Magnificently did the government maintain the dignity of their gods before the eyes of the Nubians. In this sparsely populated, poverty-stricken country, they built temples which could bear comparison with the celebrated marvels of architecture of Egyptian towns, and when the narrow valley could not provide sufficient space, the cliffs themselves were hollowed out, and thus formed the marvellous rock temples of Abu Simbel, Gerf Husên, or Dêr. Quite in the south, however, somewhere near the place where the Soudan railway leaves the desert and strikes once more into the Nile valley, at the town of Nepata in the *pure mountain*, a temple was founded which received the same name, *throne of the two lands*, which was borne by the great temple of Karnak. It was obvious that it was intended to be the southern counterpart of Karnak, the official temple of Nubia. It was a matter of course that the priesthood of this temple should receive a corresponding endowment of land and revenues, however little such a provision might be in accordance with the poverty of the country.

It is conceivable that these magnificent developments of the Egyptian religion made a lasting impression on the circumscribed inhabitants of the southern lands. When at the end of the nineteenth dynasty the bond was broken that united them with Egypt, the Egyptian language was speedily replaced by their native tongue; the Egyptian religion on the contrary remained, and attained greater power among the negroes and

Nubians than it had ever possessed in its own country. Among these barbarians it attained completely to that theocracy which the Theban priests in their own country were only able to achieve temporarily (p. 165 *et seq.*). The special lord of Nubia was Amon of Napata; whose oracle nominated the king, and deposed him or commanded his death,[1] and at its command he journeyed out to rescue the sacred places of Egypt from impure hands. For the Ethiopian at this time looked on himself as the sole orthodox representative of the Egyptian religion. Most of those who called themselves Egyptians were in his eyes impure apostates; when the defeated nobles of Egypt came to the Ethiopian king to do homage, this barbarian only allowed one of them all to enter his tent, for the others were *uncircumcised and eaters of fish, which is an abhorrence in the Palace*,[2] and in every town overrun by his wild hordes the king visited his gods and made offerings to them, for the gods of Egypt were also his. Thebes above all enjoyed the doubtful privilege of being considered by the Ethiopians as the most sacred spot; long it remained in their possession, and Ethiopian princesses officiated there as *divine wives* (p. 165).

In the seventh century, during the glorious days of Psammechus I., however, the Ethiopians were finally driven out of Egypt, and the valley of the Upper Nile speedily sank into still deeper barbarism. When we read the great inscription now in the Berlin Museum which recounts the deeds of a certain king Nastesen, who apparently lived at Meroë in the time of Kambyses, it is difficult to decide which is most amazing, the barbarism of the language or the barbarism of the contents; but this marauding, cow-stealing negro is before all things a pious worshipper of the Egyptian gods, and what he takes back to the desert tribes from his raids he devotes in large part to the gods. Above all is he indebted to Amon of Nepata, who called him out of Meroë and proclaimed him as king; but the other gods had also confirmed this decree of the supreme god, when he visited them in their towns after his accession to the throne.

This kingdom of Amon which was established among Nubians

[1] Diodorus, iii. 6. [2] Pianchy Stela, 150.

and negroes, came to an end in the third century B.C., when a king *who had enjoyed a Greek education forced his way with his soldiers into the holy of holies, where stood the golden chapel, and murdered the priests*,[1] but little change occurred in the religious

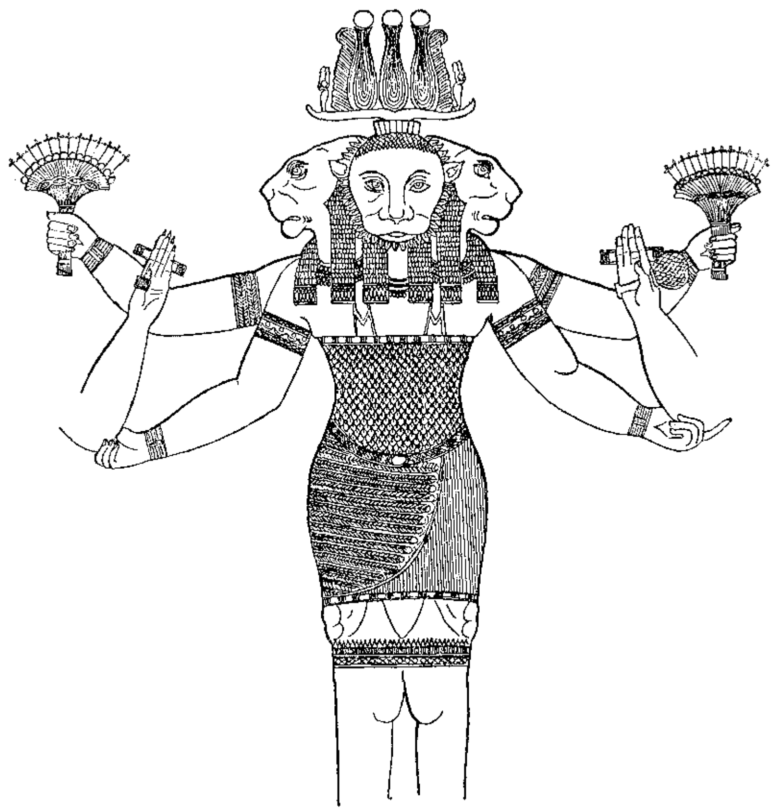


FIG. 96. ETHIOPIAN DEITY, FROM THE TEMPLE AT NAGA.
He is clasping the arms of two kings who are praying to him.

character of Ethiopia, and of the Greek cultivation of the monarch nothing reached his people.

Meroë, the principal town, now became the sacred city in place of Napata; it lay yet further south not far north of Khartoum, and the gods henceforth became more and more African and

[1] Diodorus, iii. 6.

barbaric. The paintings in the temples of Begerawîyeh and Bennaga, in which savages laden with ornaments as Pharaohs pray to uncouth gods in semi-Egyptian attire, show us how low this survival of the Egyptian religion had sunk, and even if we could succeed in deciphering these late Ethiopian inscriptions, which are written in the native language and hieroglyphs, we should hardly gain a favourable impression from them.

These barbarians also buried the dead according to Egyptian traditions; they gave them gravestones, and tables of offerings, and built pyramids of the special recognized form for their kings. And here also, as is shown by their statues, Osiris and Anubis, Isis and Nephthys watched over the dead.

The Græco-Roman world was roused to interest in this religious nation of the far South, and when they announced themselves as the true Egyptians, believed readily that it was from them that the inhabitants of Egypt had acquired their religion, their art, and their writings.[1] And when the Roman satirist makes his great lady go on pilgrimage to *the boundaries of Egypt*, in order to bring from thence the water from the temple of Isis, he places the whirlpools of Elephantine without ado at *bright Meroë*, which was more interesting to his public.[2]



FIG. 97. ETHIOPIAN GRAVESTONE. The deceased praying before Osiris and Isis. (Berlin, 2253.)

How long this Ethiopian religion lasted we do not know, but we can well imagine that paganism would survive longer in that remote part of the world than in the Roman Empire, although a eunuch of the Ethiopian Queen Candace is known to have been one of the first adherents of our own religion. Certainly its national religion would survive longest in Northern Nubia, which was under Roman rule, and which had played an important part in the religious life of the later Egyptians.

[1] Diodorus, iii. 3. [2] Juvenal, vi. 527.

At the boundary between Egypt and Nubia, the district above the first cataract, the great god Khnum, guardian of the sources of the Nile at Elephantine, was originally worshipped. By the advice of the learned Imhotep (p. 174) Zoser had once presented this god with twelve tracts of land on both sides of the river, with all their revenues and taxes, in order that he should once more send a rich Nile into the country which was suffering from its seventh year of scarcity. But later, when Isis and Osiris had won the hearts of the people, they also attained the highest rank among the Nubians, and the temple of Isis, on the small island of Philæ, which lies at the other end of the cataract, threw the neighbouring temple of Elephantine into the shade. Under Ptolemy Philadelphus the building of a new temple was begun at Philæ, which, owing to its complete state of preservation and its position in most glorious scenery, formed one of the most beautiful objects of the present day, only to be drowned by European barbarians in a reservoir.

This temple on the boundaries of Egypt occupied a unique position at this time, for it served simultaneously the religious requirements of two nations. Its lords were the Greek kings and the Roman emperors, but the Ethiopians also were permitted to make use of it. The Ethiopian king Ergamenes built there, in conjunction with Ptolemy Philopator, a chapel for his god Arsnuphis, and numerous inscriptions in the Nubian writing show how indefatigably the people of the South made pilgrimages to Philæ. The gods of the barbarians also found acceptance in this temple; Arsnuphis, and the sun god Mandulis, whose sacred place, Talmis, was situated within the boundary, the *flash-darting lord* as the Greek songs of his local worshippers call him.

The Blemmyes also, the Bedouin of the Nubian deserts, made pilgrimages to Isis of Philæ, and the Roman government, who did much to civilize these nomads, could not but allow them the exercise of their religious worship in Philæ. When the Christian religion had long triumphed in Egypt, the Nubians and Blemmyes of Philæ preferred to continue the worship of Isis, and when the general Maximinus made a treaty with both

nations in the year 452 A.D., the pious Byzantine permitted these pagans to make pilgrimages to the temple at Philæ, and annually at the festival to take out its statue of Isis.

Fully a century later, when this treaty had expired, Justinian had the temple destroyed, its priests imprisoned, and the statues of the gods carried to Constantinople. Thus Philæ was the last outpost of the Egyptian religion, and it is here that we find its latest monuments, Greek and demotic inscriptions, and the latest hieroglyphs ever written by the Egyptians. The people who inscribed these short devotions were obscure folk, but we cannot withhold our sympathy and interest from the *Prophet Smet* and the *Protostolist Smetchem*, for they are the last priests of the Egyptian gods of whom we have any knowledge.

CHAPTER X

THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD IN EGYPT

DURING the period when the Saite kings, the Persians, and the dynasts opposed to them, reigned over Egypt, a new element, which found its way into the East, penetrated also into Egypt—the Greeks. They took service in the East as soldiers, they settled down in its cities as merchants and manufacturers, and prospered everywhere by their skill and industry. They settled down quietly, exactly as they do at the present day, working, bargaining, and advancing money on usury, hated by the Orientals, and yet bound to them by a thousand ties of business relationship. As early as the time of Amasis it proved necessary to found a special Greek town in Egypt, Naukratis, the wealthy city frequented by all nationalities, and when Herodotus travelled in Egypt he found the people completely accustomed to their foreign guests. Thus when Alexander's campaign in 332 B.C. made the Greeks masters of the country, it only brought to a political conclusion what their enterprising commercial spirit had prepared long before. From this time the Greeks were the dominant people in Egypt, and the government, and part of the population of the towns were Greek. The greater part of the Egyptians remained true to their nationality and above all to their inherited belief. They remained, as they had ever been, the pious Egyptians; indeed they clung more closely to their religion than before, and when in the course of centuries these beliefs became remodelled by contact with Greece, in essentials they remained what they had always been, and instead of losing ground they actually made some advance: the Egyptian gods even gained some adherents among the Greek population.

Owing to this position of affairs there was for the Greek kings and the Roman emperors only one possible method of governing the country: by maintaining a good understanding with the religious leaders of the people. As the State took the spiritual power under its protection and assisted it in every way, so it in turn was bound to support the secular power. This mutual support, which lasted for more than five hundred years, secured to the Egyptian church a peaceful evening of life; up to the last it dwelt in its temples in glory and splendour, protected by the State even when its own people began to forsake it.

An opportunity of befriending the temples presented itself to the earlier Ptolemaic kings. In their expeditions into Asia, the three first Ptolemies found statues, temple furniture and books, which had been taken away from the temples during the Persian times, and they gladly took the opportunity *of returning them to the temples from which they had been taken.* Then the temples had ancient claims to estates, and these they now presented to them. Thus Khabbash, one of the opposing dynasts of the Persian time, at one time made a grant to the temple at Buto of a district in the immediate vicinity, but when he was overthrown by Xerxes this gift was annulled by the Persian king. It is true that the gods of Buto took their revenge on Xerxes and ordained a disgraceful end both for him and for his son—but this did not restore the property. The loss inflicted on them by the withdrawal of the gift of Khabbash had never been made good. The priests of Buto represented this to Ptolemy I., and the artful Greek thought well to grant them their request. Other undertakings of the same nature had been left behind them by the native dynasts of the Persian time in the partly finished temple buildings. They had provided the temples with means to begin some magnificent buildings, and it now devolved on their Greek successors, as a point of honour, to finish what they had begun. But when they had thus provided the building for one temple, they had to consider the claims of some neighbouring god, whose ambition was no less lofty and whose sanctuary was equally in need of new buildings. Thus early in the Ptolemaic period

there began a great epoch of temple building which lasted into Roman times; and which resulted in those mighty creations which at the present day meet us everywhere in Egypt. Denderah, Edfu, Kom Ombo, Philæ, to name only a few of these, were built under the Ptolemaic and Roman rulers, and cover a long period of time. At Edfu building continued with interruptions from 237 to 57 B.C. At Denderah and Kom Ombo it continued for about a hundred years. Philæ was begun under Ptolemy II., and in the time of Tiberius it was still unfinished. Naturally the money for all this building came only in part out of the royal purse, and it certainly happened very frequently that

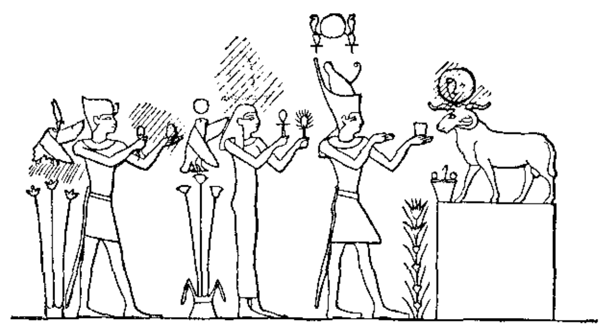


FIG. 98. PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS, ARSINOE, AND A PRINCE WORSHIPPING THE MENDES RAM. (Mendes Stela.)

what was begun as the gift of the king was carried out by means of the temple funds. But if the revenues of the gods were so great as to enable them to carry out such undertakings, it must be remembered that they owed their wealth to the kings, who provided carefully for the gods of Egypt as the earlier Pharaohs had done. And therefore it is no mere empty form that is employed when the Greek kings and Roman emperors are directly specified as the builders of the temples and when they are represented in them as pious worshippers praying and offering sacrifices. Although to them personally the crocodile god of Ombos, or the cow-horned goddess of Denderah, might appear absurd or objects of indifference, yet it was they who, as rulers of the country, maintained these deities in their grandeur and power. We gain a good insight

into this relation between the kings and the priests by means of a great memorial tablet which the priests of Mendes, a town in the Delta, set up in their temple in honour of Ptolemy II. They state that soon after coming to the throne, he visited their temple, and thus their ram was the first sacred animal worshipped by his Majesty. He had sailed in the bark of the god on the waters belonging to the temple *as the king had done who came before him, and had fulfilled all the ceremonies of the visit as they are written down.* He then observed that they were employed at the temple in repairing the damage *which the feeble barbarians had done to it,* and forthwith he gave command to rebuild the temple. *Then his Majesty returned to his place of residence, full of joy concerning that which he had done for his fathers, the very great living rams of Mendes.* When later in the fifteenth year Queen Arsinoe died, who had been priestess of the sacred ram, a funerary feast in her honour was held at Mendes, at which *there was rejoicing and her soul awoke near the living ram, as happens to the souls of all the gods and goddesses, from the beginning of the present day,* for Mendes is verily their city *where they renew their youth. And his Majesty caused her statue to be set up in all temples, which was very pleasing to their priests.* In Mendes the statue was carried in procession with the sacred ram, and it received the name "*she who is beloved by the ram, Arsinoe Philadelphus.*" This Mendes temple also received marks of favour of a substantial kind. When a tax on shipping was imposed on the whole country, the province of Mendes was exempt, for the priests *said to his Majesty that hitherto they had never paid a tax, and all that came in and out of their city belonged to their god,* and that Re had formed the land for that purpose. And, moreover, when a part of the revenues of all the nomes had to be paid into the exchequer, the king arranged that for the future Mendes should not be required to pay its share. Then the priests informed him that Thoth himself had given an injunction to the kings of all future time that they should make provision for the offerings *to the living ram. Should they diminish these offerings an endless multitude of misfortunes would arise among men.*

In the twenty-first year the temple was completed; the ceremony of consecration, at which the king was represented by his son, was celebrated throughout the country. After the festival the priests followed the court to the royal residence with bouquets of flowers and unguents, to give pleasure to the king; *his Majesty anointed himself with myrrh, his garments also were scented, and his Majesty caused some of them to be brought to him in the palace, and all the princes did the same as he.* Finally, during the reign, an event of great good fortune occurred for Mendes: a new sacred ram was discovered. The king was informed of this, in order that he might have it tested by the college of the learned. He announced it therefore in all the temples. They examined the ram and found that its form corresponded to the requirements of the ancient writings. *They gave it the title: "living soul of Re, living soul of Shu, living soul of Keb, and living soul of Osiris,"* as had been done since the time of the ancestors. When this was reported to the king, he commanded that the new ram should be set on his throne, and he celebrated this *king of the animals of Egypt* with a great feast, at which the statue of Arsinoe had the honour of being placed next to that of the ram in the procession.

While memorial tablets of this description tell us what the kings did for the gods, others show us in what manner the priests testified their gratitude. On special occasions the entire body of priests assembled at one temple, and decided in ceremonious conclave what extraordinary honours they could bestow on the king. Apart from this high honours had already been accorded to him. Even during their lifetime the kings were recognized as gods, as the *gods who love as brethren*, or the *beneficent gods* as was demanded by the ideas of the Hellenistic court. Thus for instance the priests assembled in the temple of Canopus in the year 238 B.C., and recounted what the *beneficent gods*, i. e. Ptolemy III. and his consort, had done for the temples. *They have benefited the temples in the land and greatly increased the dignity of the gods.* They have *provided in every way for Apis, Mnevis, and the other esteemed sacred animals* (there must therefore have been some which were not held in esteem) *with great sumptuousness and cost.* The king in

his wars acquired *the sacred statues which had been carried away by the Persians,* and restored them to the temples. Finally he secured peace for the inhabitants of the land, and in famine secured them from hunger. In recognition of all this the honour of the king should be even more exalted in the temples and *the priests of all the temples in the land shall be called "Priests of the beneficent gods," and this shall therefore be written in all writings, and upon the seal rings worn by them shall there be engraved the priesthood of the beneficent gods.* Thus, in addition to the four classes into which, according to ancient custom, the priesthood was divided (p. 54), a fifth had now to be added of all who had become priests under these kings, and of all their successors, and this class was to be called after the *beneficent gods.* In addition to the three monthly festivals already established for the beneficent gods, a great yearly festival was now to be celebrated in the temples and throughout the country, and this was to be on the new year's day of the ancient year. But in order that this day may always coincide in the calendar with other festivals as it did in this year of its appointment, the calendar shall be reformed and rendered permanent. Also because the little Princess Berenike died during this conference, a statue of this goddess shall be set up in the sanctuary of Kanopus near the statue of Osiris; and, as she died in that month of Tybi, in which the daughter of Re (p. 28)—*he called her his serpent, and his eye out of love*—once departed from life, an event which was celebrated in most of the temples with a great procession, so, in Tybi Berenike was to be honoured with a similar procession in all the temples. And a golden statue inlaid with precious stones must be deposited in the greater temples, and carried round with the other divine statues, and she must have a crown of two ears of corn and a serpent and a papyrus staff round which a serpent shall be entwined. Another statue shall have offerings made to it by the daughters of the priests and other maidens at the Osiris festival in the month Khoiakh, hymns also shall be written in her honour and inscribed in the sacred books. And all this and much more must be perpetuated by being set forth three times, in the ancient language, in the language of the people and in Greek. What must have been the feelings of the

Greek king when he received such a resolution with due gratitude from the hands of the priests, and what must have been the sensations of the faithful members of the clerical party when they recollected that these *beneficent gods* and all their nobles were none other than what were formerly termed the *miserable northern barbarians.* It was in fact unnatural and disproportionate that the most accomplished and educated monarchs of that time should appear as the friends of sacred sheep and cattle, and that the most ancient priesthood in the world should pay greater honour to kings of a foreign nationality than they had accorded to their own dynasts. Both sides went very much too far, and yet both sides gained thereby.

As the priests held firmly to the antiquated forms of their cults, so in their buildings they would make no concessions to modern times. On the contrary, they wished that these buildings should conform with the regulations laid down at the earliest times; *their height* must be *good, their width correct, the whole well reckoned, squared according to the wisdom of Thoth, and therefore as set forth in the sacred writings.*[1] Denderah was built according to a design of the time of Kheops, and the ground-plan of Edfu was actually designed by the divine Imhotep (p. 174). These later buildings differ from the ancient temples only, in that they are carried out according to one scheme, while with the others the projected plan varied with the developments and changes of the centuries, the same difference which we find between a modern cathedral and one of the middle ages. Similarly in the later work in Egyptian temples we observe deterioration in artistic feeling, exaggeration of form, and excess of ornamentation.

Another point in which these later temples differ from the early ones is the subject of their inscriptions. If we read through the whole of the inscriptions in a temple of the New Kingdom at Abydos, for instance, and examine all the scenes depicted there, we gain very few facts: the names of the gods worshipped there and of special ceremonies, a list of the offerings, and, in the best instances, the text of the ritual employed.

[1] Dümichen, *Resultate*, 38–41.

What besides took place in the temple (and in such an immense institution much must have occurred) is concealed from us, or rather it is omitted as self-evident, or as a matter of no importance. In this later time it is different. The method of making incense for the gods was no longer obvious, for outside the sacred precincts there would now be no merchants of spices who knew how to prepare it. Also when the enemies of the *nine bows* are mentioned in the temple an explanation must first be given of what this meant, for in ordinary life at this time they are referred to merely as Greeks, Romans, Syrians, and Persians. People must be told what books the library contains and what statues the temple possesses, what are the names of the days and hours according to ancient tradition, and what episodes in the life of the god have given their names to the transactions in the temple and its vicinity. Now for the first time the ceremonial of the great feast is described and all the details of the cult, when these steps are to be mounted and that door entered, at what places a halt is to be made during the processions, all the songs that are to be sung, and the formulæ to be used in praying. However unimportant these may have been originally, they are hallowed by the course of centuries, and future generations of priests must not deviate from them in the smallest detail. It is not sufficient to commit them to the perishable papyri, they must also be engraved in stone. Thus the walls of the Ptolemaic temples are covered with inscriptions, which convey to us the knowledge possessed by the priests, sacred and profane, important or the reverse, an inscribed library of temple habits and customs. The priests had little reason to fear that great mysteries would be read by the profane, for they had replaced the old hieroglyphs by a new form of writing, which was highly convenient, as it could only be read by the initiated. The language also in which they wrote could only properly be understood by themselves, for with immense erudition they polished up the ancient written language of their forefathers. From the literature of three thousand years they made a collection of phrases, and now pleased themselves by making use of these expressions, of which no one now knew anything, in their own inscriptions. Real delight it must have afforded them to write

one and the same inscription ten times over in succession, and each time to employ different expressions.

From the temple of Hathor at Denderah we may learn how such a sanctuary was organized : *the great one, mistress of Denderah, eye of the sun, lady of heaven, mistress of all the gods, daughter of Re, who hath no equal.* She was a cheerful goddess, *lady of rejoicing and mistress of the dancing, lady of music and mistress of song, lady of leaping and mistress of wreathing garlands.*[1] Her sanctuary, *the places of drunkenness,* the place with *pleasant life* and its other innumerable names, remained unfinished. The gateway and great court were never built; instead of them there is an open space laid out in front of the temple, where the crowds assembled for the great festivals. The privileged guests would have places assigned them in the great front hall (A in the accompanying plan) with which the temple begins at the present day, and from whose four-and-twenty columns the kindly countenance of Hathor smiles down upon us.[2]

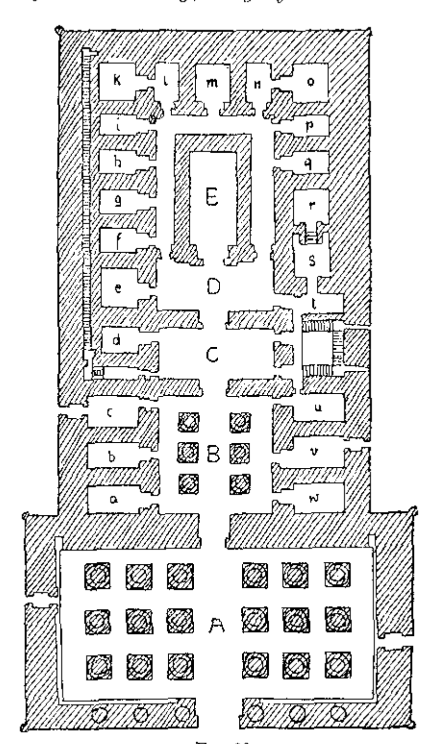


Fig. 99.
GROUND-PLAN OF THE TEMPLE OF DENDERAH.

This hall was partly public, but with the next large hall (B), the *Hall of Appearings,* we enter on the precincts exclusively set apart for the religious ceremonies. In it the processions took place *at the beautiful feasts,* while the next apartment served as

[1] Dümichen, *Resultate,* 45, 4.
[2] The following is from information kindly given by H. Junker

the *hall of offerings* on those days when they carried *the god to his repast.* The next doorway leads us into the central hall (D). The inscriptions and pictures on the walls show that it served as ante-chamber for the point of exit of the processions. Here we see the standard-bearers, who precede the deities, when on festivals they leave their dwelling-place. This sanctuary of the festivals (E), the *great place*, is a dark enclosed chamber of sufficient size to accommodate the shrines and the barks used to carry the various gods, and also for the priests who here perform the various ceremonies of the ritual as is represented by the scenes on the walls. Behind this chamber there lies the actual holy of holies (m) that contained the principal statue of Hathor, which received daily veneration; this bears the name of the *great house*, and is one of the long line of chambers that surround the inner compartments on all sides. Of these, near the *Hall of Appearings* on the left, is the place for preparing ointments and incense (a), another chamber for flowers (b), and another to which offerings were taken after Hathor had delighted herself with them (c); a door leading from this may have communicated with warehouses behind. To the right were placed, among others, the treasury of the temple (w), and a chamber for the supply of water (v), the outer door of which must have led to the well. The chamber (d) was used in some way in connection with the adjoining *chamber of offerings,* while (e) contained the garments and ointments of the goddess used at her toilet. The chambers at the back of the temple are principally holy places. Thus (g) is the place where her mother gave birth to the goddess: the scenes upon the walls represent the king bringing milk and linen to Hathor, gifts befitting a divine infant. The chambers (h) and (i) are chapels of Osiris Sokaris and of Horus, *the uniter of the Two Lands,* while (o) is the abode of Re. The rooms next to the second holy of holies are ante-chambers to it, in (l) the statue of the god was purified with water, *the fire house* (n) served for burning incense and for burnt offerings. Near to this are two chambers (k and p) for the musical instruments of the cult, for the sistra and the great neck-chains which rattled with the movements of the dancers. Finally, three chambers (n, s, t) form a spot of peculiar sanctity; they are the places where the

great feasts of the turn of the year are celebrated, *the day of the child in the nest,* the day on which Hathor was born, the New Year, and others. They consist of a small raised temple, where the goddess must have been enshrined, and where she was clothed and anointed; a court where offerings were made to her, and an ante-chamber which probably contained the valuables used at this festival.

Of the stairways leading to the roof the long one was used for the processions at festivals. Here the statue of the goddess was carried with great ceremony on to the roof, and deposited in a small open temple in order that the sun might behold her, and that *Hathor might meet with her father.*

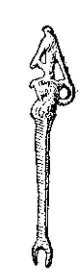
On another part of the roof lay the small sanctuary of Osiris, at this time an essential part of every large temple, for it was this god who for a long period stood first in the confidence of the Egyptians. Here in the month of Khoiakh, according to an ancient and widely diffused custom, ceremonies were observed, representing the resurrection of Osiris. A mummy figure was made of earth and grains of barley; this was moistened, and before long the grain germinated and sprouted, and the inanimate figure became green and living.

There is no doubt that this place on the temple roof, which we now invade with profane footsteps, was a spot of the deepest mystery, but there were others even more secret which are now open to us. In the thickness of the massive walls of the temple narrow secret passages were concealed, whose existence no one could surmise from the outside. In these secret places, *whose contents no stranger knows, and whose doors are concealed,*[1] were kept the statues and sacred vessels when they were not required for the ceremonies.

Thus these temples with their rich adornments towered over the teeming streets of the Egyptian towns, and served as witness to the crowds that centuries might come and go as they would, but within these sacred precincts all remained unchanged; the priests daily performed their functions in the holy of holies, as had been done for thousands of years, and on the same days and in the same way as of old the people would see the great

[1] Dümichen, *Resultate,* Pl. 36.

deity carried out of the temple to go to some sacred spot, or to pay a friendly visit to the divine majesty of some neighbouring temple. Thus, for instance, Horus of Edfu[1] left his temple on the day before his great festival at his temple, accompanied by his companion god Khonsu, and by the four spears with which the god fought with Set, and journeyed to meet the two deities who were on their way from other cities to visit him, Horus of El Kab, and Hathor of Denderah. These gods were to commemorate in company, during a festival lasting many days, the triumph over Set or Set's confederates and the enthronement of Horus. But it is by no means clear that they were concerned merely with these matters, for it was a sheer unending round of ceremonies that was ordained by *custom* for these days. Thus when the gods of Edfu wished to embark on the ship with the new arrivals in order to enter the city with due ceremony there had first to be read *the spells which protect the ship*, sacrifices were offered, *distributions of wine* and *distributions of land* were made, geese were sent flying as messengers, bunches of flowers were bought, and there were many other details to be observed. At last the voyage began, but only to be promptly interrupted. For the *place of Keb* was reached, and here they had to moor and *prepare a great burnt offering for this glorious god. Once more the ceremony for embarking on the ship was performed, and the ceremony whereby the ship is protected was performed and the ships were launched*, and at last *they sailed away to Edfu.* It is further carefully chronicled which of the high officials of Upper Egypt took part as representatives of the king, and what was the correct sailing order of the ships. The musicians were on the ship of the princes of Edfu ; on landing at the temple it fell to the prince of El Kab to grasp the forepart of the ship containing the gods, while the prince of another town was responsible for the stern. The prince of Denderah had *with his people to bring gifts.* Two of the princes brought a bull for sacrifice, another supplied five hundred loaves, one hundred jugs of beer, the haunch of an ox and thirty goats for the supplies of the people of other


FIG. 100. THE SPEAR OF HORUS. (Amulett. Berlin, 15125.)

[1] The following is taken from the festival calendar of Edfu.

cities who had accompanied their god to the feast. When these had arrived, they *sat down and drank, and celebrated a festival for these honoured gods; they drank and anointed themselves and shouted very loud, together with the inhabitants of the town.*

On the first day of this festival the group of gods with their followers, who had passed the night near the temple, were led to the *upper temple*, which must have been situated somewhere on the desert level. Here all settled down on the ground and performed offerings and ceremonies. The gods were set up and the *scribes of the sacred books* performed the victory of Horus. Four times they called out, "*Horus has come in triumph, and everything that was commanded him has been done. His mother Isis rejoices because he has undertaken this his charge with a glad heart.* The gods of Edfu, *the living souls, sit on their throne* and gaze *upon the lord of the gods* and *joy pervades Edfu.*" The priests also *say in answer very often*, "*Rejoice, ye living souls! Horus is triumphant. All that was commanded him is accomplished.*" Thus calling, the procession breaks up and goes to the *halls of the school.* First *there is brought an unclean goat and an unclean ox; the intestines are taken out and a great burnt sacrifice offered, when the belly is filled with all manner of sweet-smelling herbs, and must and wine flow out of it.* Then there is read *the veneration of Horus, whose inheritance is made sure,* and four other books. . . . Offerings are made to Re, while he is called upon *in all his names*, and there are brought to him one hundred loaves, one hundred white loaves, five jugs of beer, flat loaves, dates, milk, geese, and wine. Then the priests say, "*Praise to thee, Re; praise to thee, Khepre, in all these thy beautiful names. Thou comest hither strong and mighty and hast ascended beautiful, and hast slain the dragon. Incline thy beautiful countenance to the king!*" Then again four geese are set free to fly to the four winds, to inform the gods that *King Horus of Edfu, the great god, the lord of heaven, has taken the white crown and has added the red crown thereto.* A man who figures at the festival as *the beloved son* shoots with a bow to the four quarters of heaven, and thus slays the enemies of the gods. Nosegays are brought to the god,

an ox is slain, and his right leg is thrown among the crowd, where *a man who is called Horus* receives it. Thereupon the retinue of Horus beat the drums. Further ceremonies are performed with a wax hippopotamus on which *the names of the enemies of all the nomes* are written, and with pottery crocodiles; fish are thrown upon the ground and all the priests hack and hew at them with knives, saying: "*Cut ye wounds on your bodies, kill ye one another; Re triumphs over his enemies, Horus of Edfu triumphs over all evil ones.*" They then explain *the meaning* of this last custom; it is the destruction of the enemies of the gods and of the king which they have accomplished. This ends the ceremonies at the school for this day: those taking part can now rest. *The people drink in the evening before this god and spend the night gaily in this place.* Thus thirteen days are spent until at last the strange gods depart to their homes, and those of Edfu return to their temple and peace once more reigns in the city. In all these proceedings there must have been much which the crowd that took part in the festival could not understand, notwithstanding the accompanying *meaning;* and the ancient language employed by the priests in the singing and praying must have been entirely incomprehensible to them. But it must have been precisely this incomprehensibility that greatly enhanced the general impression produced. The contrast between the ancient piety and reverence and the profane modern world, between the priests with their antique garb and the Greek police and Roman officials, could only strengthen the people in their veneration for the ancient faith. Nevertheless, as time went on the Egyptians were unable to preserve their religion altogether free from the influence of the foreigners who ruled them.

The first influence that made itself felt appears to us to-day to have been the work of an able man who acted as a connecting link between the king and the clerics. At the court of the first two Ptolemies lived Manetho, a priest of Sebennytus in the Delta; one of those people whose education was conducted on two entirely different lines, very similar to the upbringing of the modern effendi, who has studied in Paris. In order to acquaint his employers with the history of their new

country, Manetho compiled a Greek history of Egypt, a melancholy piece of bungling which, however, he contrived to invest with an air of authority by his attitude of criticism towards Herodotus.

When the *king beheld in a dream the dark god of Sinope*, who bade him convey his statue to Egypt, it was Manetho who with the Greek Timotheus knew how to interpret this marvel correctly. The god who thus hankered after Egypt was at home there, even though his appearance was entirely different on the Nile and on the Black Sea. The bearded, wavy-haired god of Sinope was no other than Wser-hap, the deceased sacred Apis bull, whose grave was so greatly venerated by all people, and Wser-hap, or as he is called in Greek, Serapis, was thus a god equally sacred both to Greeks and Egyptians, the true god for the empire of the Ptolemies. There is no doubt that the other priests accepted this explanation, for the Osiris Apis from this time ranked among the greatest gods of Egypt. That he was originally only a dead sacred bull was forgotten and he was confused with Osiris until finally Serapis became nothing more than the Greek name for the Egyptian god of the dead.

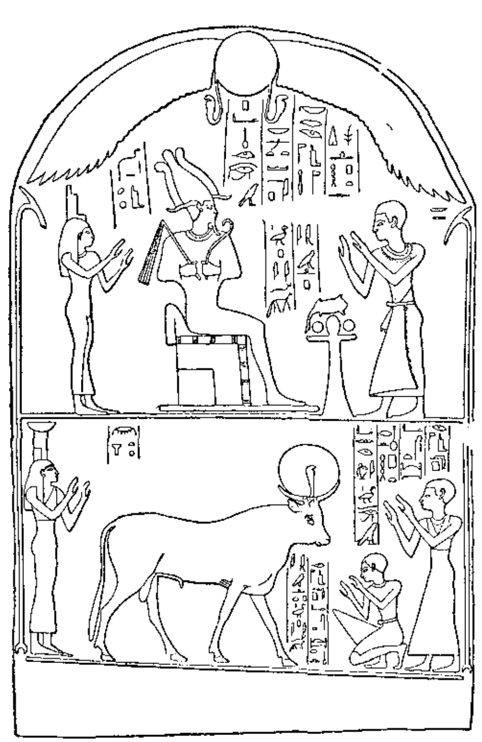


FIG. 101. GRAVESTONE OF A MAN NAMED IMHOTEP.
Above he is praying before Osiris; below before Osiris-Apis.
(Berlin, 7304.)

His sanctuary near the Apis tombs was eventually decorated with statues of fabulous beings and of Greek philosophers; perhaps these last had now come to be regarded as having derived their wisdom from Osiris.

At this time other members of the Osirian group also received special forms which arose among the people. They were of Greek origin but were diffused throughout the whole of the nation. Thus Isis is represented as semi-Greek, in a dress which may be seen on the statues of women of the New Kingdom.



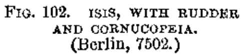


FIG. 102. ISIS, WITH RUDDER AND CORNUCOPEIA. (Berlin, 7502.)



FIG. 103. ISIS-HATHOR-APHRODITE. (Berlin, 13791.)

Or, as goddess of the port of Alexandria, she appears as the patroness of sea-faring; in this case she holds a rudder in her hand, or is wearing the Greek travelling hat. Or, as Isis-Hathor she is compounded with Aphrodite, and then she appears entirely unclothed. Her child, moreover, Har-pe-khrot, "Horus the child," as a plump sucking infant, becomes the universal favourite Harpokrates. These compound forms were never accepted in the ancient Egyptian temples, but with the people they took the place of the gods more and more during the course

of centuries. In the temple, the Osiris-Serapis was known as a mummy figure with a high crown and plaited beard, but the small figures in the houses represent him in Grecian style with curly hair and beard, and with the modius on his head, and as this was the more beautiful figure, the Egyptian must also have pictured him under this form when he prayed to him. It was Greek art that made this breach in ancient Egyptian ideas.

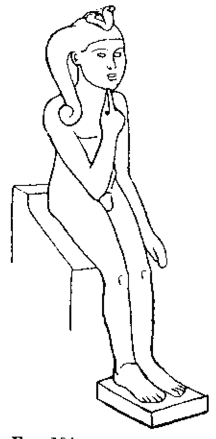


FIG. 104. HARPOKRATES (Har-pe-khrot). (Hilton Price Collection.)

For this period we also possess the evidence of a Greek traveller, Strabo, who visited Egypt about the time of Augustus. The country had then become for the Roman world what it has now become for us, a land of great sights, where the Pyramids, the colossi of Memnon, and the royal graves of Thebes were to be seen, and where the tourist inscribed his name



FIG. 105. SERAPIS, WITH THE RAM'S HORNS OF AMON, AS ZEUS-SERAPIS. (Berlin, 11479.)



FIG. 106. SERAPIS AND EAGLE. (Hilton Price Collection.)

on the monuments of antiquity. What Strabo found to wonder at in these sights does not interest us here, but we must not pass

over other matters in his report. First there is his account of the worship of animals. According to him they play a more important part than we should gather from Herodotus, and he professes to know that in the Egyptian temples, taken on the whole, there are no statues of gods, but only of sacred animals.[1] The reason for this statement may possibly be that the foreigner would naturally observe the most peculiar features of the Egyptian faith, and also it cannot be doubted that the veneration of animals had actually increased and become more prominent since the time of Herodotus. For this is the time when an inscription—full of feeling—was composed in verse for the gravestone of a poisonous serpent that had been slain,[2] in which a Roman who had inadvertently killed a cat[3] was put to death by the mob, and in which the people of two neighbouring provinces carried on a death feud because one worshipped a fish and the other a dog.[4] In this veneration there was much that was no longer entirely unworldly. If the people of Denderah were able to tame crocodiles, it was good so long as it was done in accordance with religious traditions; but they were well aware that money might be made of this, and that in Rome a man could exhibit as a crocodile tamer.[5] It is clear also that the sacred animals in the temples were regarded as sights to be exhibited. Apis and his mother lived in small sanctuaries opening on to a court, and people were permitted to look at Apis through the door. For strangers, however, he was allowed to go free for a time in the court: no doubt for substantial payment.[6] How the sacred crocodile was treated at Arsinoe we will leave Strabo himself to tell. *He was fed with bread, meat and wine, which are perpetually brought him by strangers when they come to see him. Our host, who belonged to the upper classes, and who accompanied us then went with us to the lake, and had taken from our meal a small cake, and roast meat and a small pig with a drink prepared with honey. We went up to the animal who lay on the margin of the water. The priests went up to him; one opened his mouth, and the other thrust in the cake and the meat, and poured the drink into*

[1] Strabo, 17. 28.
[2] Ausf. Verz., p. 339.
[3] Diodorus, 1., 84.
[4] Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 72.
[5] Strabo, 17. 44.
[6] *ib.* 17. 31.

his mouth. He then plunged into the lake and swam to the other side. As another stranger came, who had also brought an offering, the priest ran quickly round the lake with it, and presented it in the same manner.[1]

An additional object of interest to educated Greeks was to see the learned priests from whom the Greeks must have learnt so much. Strabo had their houses at Heliopolis pointed out to him, but the *philosophers* and *astronomers* themselves were no longer there; all he met were merely *sacrificers and expounders to strangers.*[2] The Theban priests on the contrary were regarded as sages who were at the head of every branch of knowledge.[3] He also mentions priestesses in Thebes, and what he relates of them is too remarkable to be omitted.[4] The most beautiful and distinguished of the maidens there must be nominally consecrated to the god Amon; for a whole month she may then bestow her favours on any one she choses, after that mourning is made for her and she is given in marriage. Instinctively we are reminded here of the divine wives, the chief concubines, and the singing women who formed the household of Amon during the New Kingdom, and we question whether this strange account may not have had a somewhat similar basis. But who can tell whether Strabo had not merely misunderstood the ancient custom, for no other of our sources tells anything of this strange institution; and of the priesthood of this latest period we have abundant knowledge, such as we scarcely possess for any other period; for, in addition to all the inscriptions which these priests themselves left behind, we have the remarkable confirmation of the Greek papyri which also illustrate this side of Egyptian life. On their gravestones, their coffins and dedicatory inscriptions we read how they served numerous gods of such and such a temple, and others in the vicinity, that they were priests to this king, and that queen, and how they attended on the divine children of the temple, and provided for the sacred animals. And all these priesthoods connected themselves with the highest titles of the ancient Pharaonic times and proudly state that father, grandfather, and all relations both on the

[1] Strabo, 17. 38. [2] *ib.* 17. 29.
[3] *ib.* 17. 46. [4] *ib.* 17. 46.

paternal and maternal side were also priests of high rank. And this distinguished and esteemed position, whose burden cannot have been altogether overpowering, was doubtless combined with a good income, for a great temple of this period was in a position richly to remunerate its staff. This is shown, for instance, on an inscription at Edfu, which enumerates with great detail lands possessed by the temple in the first century B.C. There is much here which is incomprehensible to us; but we find that they consisted of at least thirty-three square miles in land, distributed in large or small portions over various parts of Upper Egypt. We have also to remember that it is only the landed estates that are here recorded; we do not know to what the rest of the property may have amounted, in actual gold, in rents and tribute. In any case in the Greek period it was no bad fortune to belong to the priestly body of a great temple. But if we examine the papyri[1] we shall find that there were other temples where the priests had not such a brilliant lot. On the western border of the Fayum, on the lake of Moeris, was the temple of *Sobk of the Island, Soknopaios* as it is called by the Greeks. It had a high-priest who received a small stipend of 344 drachmæ, and all the other priests together received daily about one bushel of wheat as remuneration for their trouble. They were not even immune from the statute labour on the embankments, and if these were lessened for them, it was owing to the good offices of their fellow-citizens. The revenues of the temple both in regular incomes and what was given in offerings, was used for the requirements of the ceremonies, for at every festival fine linen must



FIG. 107. PRIESTS CARRYING A STATUE OF HARPOKRATES. (Berlin, 12417.)

[1] For the following see Erman and Krebs, *Aus den Papyrus der Kgl. Museen*, p. 178–186.

be provided for the clothing of the three statues of the gods, and each time that cost 100 drachmæ; 20 drachmæ were paid on each occasion for the unguents and oil of myrrh employed in anointing the statues, 500 drachmæ were for incense, while 40 drachmæ were required to supply sacrifices and incense for the birthdays of the emperor. And yet these priests, who were in the position of the peasantry and of the lower classes of townspeople, maintained that their position in no way diminished their ancient sanctity. Their children at an early age were enrolled as *recruits* by the various classes of priests, and after marriage their daughters retained the rank of their fathers. If any of them transgressed the traditional cus-



FIG. 108. HARPOKRATES ON A GOOSE. (Hilton Price Collection.)



FIG. 109. HARPOKRATES ON A RAM. (Berlin, 8794.)

toms and wore woollen garments, or allowed his hair to grow, the assistance of the authorities was appealed to, for had not linen garments and a shaven head (p. 72) been for long the distinguishing mark of the priests? Also the practice of circumcision, which at one time had been universal among the Egyptians, although without any great importance being attached to it, had now become a custom of the priests; only by permission of the high-priest might it now be performed on the children belonging to their families, and only after the elders of the classes of priests had testified that the child had no defect that would disqualify him as a priest. This high-priest was moreover the

highest religious official for a large district; in reality he was merely the representative of the distinguished Roman official, who as *high-priest of Alexander and of all Egypt* exercised political supervision over the temples of the Nile Valley.

Whether this supervision by a Roman or a Greek was at first ill received by the nation we do not know; certainly such a feeling cannot have continued long, for in the centuries following the birth of Christ, Greece obtained increasing ascendency over the native Egyptian ideas, and thus religion finally became



FIG. 110. HARPOKRATES CARRYING A JAR. (Ashmolean Museum.)



FIG. 111. ISIS AS A SERPENT. (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.)

a complete admixture of Greek and Egyptian elements. It no longer struck any one as incongruous that there should be a temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in the ancient city of Sobk, and that the feast of Sobk should be celebrated there in connection with the birthday of Dea Roma. If the great temples of the land could receive such combination without hesitation, the people themselves would naturally not hold back. Unfortunately this latest national belief is a sealed book to us, and only too often we are ignorant which of the gods it is who is concealed under all the new names and forms we meet with

Who for instance is Thripis? who is the god Phemnoer[1] in the Fayum? and who is the great god Antaios, after whom a town is named?

We gain some knowledge of this religion of the people, of which the ancient temples knew nothing, from the small pottery figures of gods that we find in houses of the third century A.D. They were the sacred images of the common people, and they are often found with a lamp, which was lighted on feast-days in honour of the god. No god was closer to the heart of the people than the young Harpokrates, and the figures which represent him as a child show why the people took such special delight in him.



FIG. 112. ISIS-SOTHIS ON A DOG. (Berlin, 9956.)



FIG. 113. OSIRIS AS A MUMMY. (Berlin, 9368.)

But he also appears in his character as a god. He is enthroned as a follower of the sun god, in the ship, or in the flower (p. 26), and rides armed upon the ram, which was an attribute of Amon. The goose also, which had been venerated in Thebes since the New Kingdom as a sacred bird of Amon,[2] was now assigned to him—he rides upon it or feeds it kindly with a turnip. When the little god is represented as ithyphallic, he is probably in this respect following Min; but why he should also masquerade as an old man and carry a basket on his arm we cannot fathom.

[1] Berlin Griech. Urk., No. 471.

[2] Ausführl. Verz. p. 231.

Occasionally, in Greek fashion, Harpokrates carries the cornucopeia, from which he distributes his gifts. This vessel of romance, however, is generally replaced by a jar, which doubtless contains the food supplied by the god for mankind.

In the case of his mother Isis also the human side of her character is emphasized. She is represented with her infant at times in an attitude which inevitably suggests our Madonna. From the earliest times the star Sothis, whose appearance in the eastern sky betokens inundation, had been regarded as Isis. As the Greeks called this star the dog-star, the goddess as Isis-Sothis

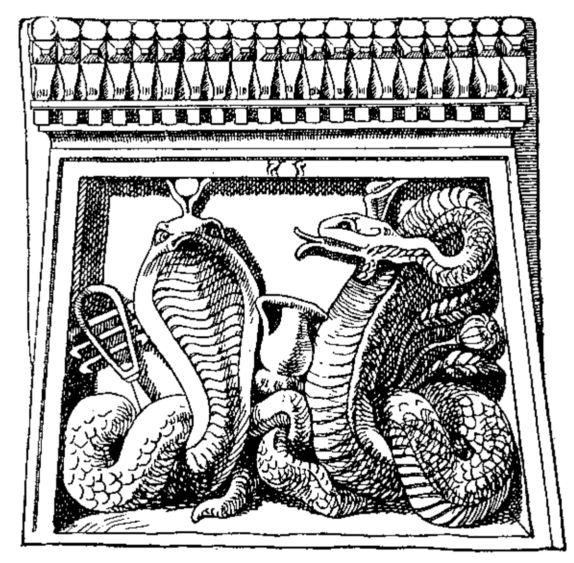


FIG. 114. ISIS AND OSIRIS IN A SHRINE.
(Berlin, 8164.)

now rides a dog, on whose head this star sparkles. Isis is also represented as a serpent, the ancient guardian of Re (p. 10, 20), and to accommodate himself to her Osiris also takes a serpent form. The distinguishing marks of Isis are here the sistrum, the ancient musical instrument of women (p. 48), and the vase out of which water is poured to her in the temple; for Osiris as god of the dead a suitable symbol is a poppy-head, which causes men to sleep. Or, again, Osiris appears as a crowned mummy,

which we must acknowledge acquires more and more the appearance of a vase as time goes on. He is yet more frequently represented as Serapis, reigning as lord of the under-world, with Cerberus near him.

The popularity of these three great deities is shared by a fourth, Bes, who earlier had played a very insignificant part (p. 75). His appearance is as grotesque as ever, but he frequently appears as a warrior, with shield and sword. Other gods of the old mythology also make their appearance as soldiers, Anubis, and the jackal-god Wepwawet, who in a figure in the Berlin Museum is represented as a bearded soldier on horseback; with his lance he attacks his foe, who in some cases is lying beneath him in the form of a crocodile, exactly similar to the St. George of Christian art. The Apis also, and the sacred cows, monkeys, cats, crocodiles, and hawks are not yet forgotten.



FIG. 115. BES AS A PROTECTING WARRIOR. (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.)

To these native deities we must now add Zeus and Helios, Artemis and Aphrodite, Dionysus, Heracles and Priapus; they also are frequently Egyptianized, and even Helios is made to hold a crocodile in his hand. Who is the winged sphinx, with paws resting on a wheel? Who is the naked woman with the huge garland? Who is her rival beauty with crippled arms? and who is the third in the group, the fat monster with wide-

FIG. 116. HORUS AS A WARRIOR. (Berlin, 9685.)

spread legs grovelling on the ground? It is possible that this last strange disguise conceals a divinity who is of neither Greek nor Egyptian origin. For here, as everywhere in the Roman empire, various religious propaganda had imposed their ideas, and followers of Mithras, and other votaries of secret cults, had penetrated into the Nile valley, as they had to the banks of the Rhine and elsewhere in Europe. Among these rival propaganda, it was Christianity that eventually triumphed, and as early as the third century it had already gained a great hold upon the population. Among the pottery figures of the gods of which we have been speaking, we are already greeted by the beloved form of the Good Shepherd.



FIG. 117. THE GOOD SHEPHERD. Found among similar pagan figures at Ehnas 1899. (Berlin, 14852 and 14866.)

These mixed beliefs appear in their most acute forms in the magical texts of this period, where in the same breath Osiris is mentioned with Sabaoth, the archangel, and the Greek gods. Even now the sorcerer, to whom God is to appear in a dream, appeals to *Moses, to whom thou didst manifest thyself upon the mountain*, and at the same time assures him that he *will glorify him in Abydos, and in heaven before Re.*[1] Whether the spells are written in Greek for the educated, or in Egyptian for the people, their form is always the same, and they are always full of phrases of foreign origin which are only derived in small measure from the ancient Egyptian magic. He who wishes to render an enemy powerless will take an ass's head, smear his feet with clay, and seat himself opposite the sun, with the ass's head between his feet, and anoint his hands and mouth with ass's blood, and place his right hand in front, and the other behind, and speak, saying: *I invoke thee, who art in the void air, terrible, invisible, almighty, god of gods, dealing destruction, and making desolate, oh thou who hatest a well-ordered house. When thou wast cast out of Egypt and out of this country thou wast entitled "He that destroyeth all, and is unconquered." I invoke thee, Typhon Set! I perform thy exorcism, for I invoke thee by*

[1] Griffith and Thompson, *Demotic Magical Papyrus*, p. 47.

thy powerful name, by which thou canst not refuse to hear: Io erbeth, Io pakerbeth, Iobolkoseth, Iopatathnax, Iosoro, Io-neb-outoso-naleth, Aktiophi, Ereskhigal, Neb-oposoaleth, Aberamenthou, Lerthex-anax, Ethrelyoth, Nemereba, Aemina! Come to me and approach, and strike down such a man, or, such a woman, with cold and fever. He has wronged me, and has shed the blood of Typhon . . . therefore I do these things.[1] Here the gigantic Typhon, whose form was assumed by Set when he was driven out of the country, is Greek; *anax* has a Greek sound. Among the Egyptian names is *io*, for *io* means an ass, the figure by which the terrible Set was represented, and whose head the magician had placed in front of him. But from what a distance others of these names may have come is shown by *eres-chigal*, for this is nothing else than the






FIG. 118. AMULETS: INSCRIBED STONE.
(Berlin, 9865, 9799, 9865, 9858.)

ancient Sumerian name of the goddess of the under-world,[2] which the Babylonian magicians must have brought into Egypt. Similar phrases are also used on the inscribed stones which were worn as amulets. For these it was necessary to have gods represented, Egyptian, Greek, or strange compounds, and these must be connected with inscriptions such as *Iao Abrasax* or *Iao Sabaoth*, or *Semes ilam*, "the young sun," or *Bai n khookh*, "the souls of darkness." [3]

In addition to the foreign names and formulæ there were also during this epoch new forms of superstition introduced into Egypt, there to flourish luxuriantly. Among these were the horoscope, alchemy, prophesying by means of dreams, and others which appear to have had no place in the earlier magic

[1] Griffith and Thompson, *Demotic Magical Papyrus*, p. 145.
[2] *ib*. p. 61.
[3] Ausfürh. Verz., S. 378 *et seq*.

of the Egyptians. The principal matters dealt with are the same as those of the ancient art, cures of diseases and wounds, love spells, magic to secure power and importance, and all the foreign spells which cause madness and disease. A magician of this time could also understand the language of birds and reptiles, he could open earth and the under-world, and summon the dead from the under-world.[1] According to the belief of this time the dead could by other means return to the world and to life; and a story[2] explicitly tells us how Osiris, when he was prayed to by the Prince Khamoës for a son, sent him a dead man skilled in magic, who was born to him as his son Si-usire. Si-usire aided his father by means of his magic, and on one occasion took him down to the under-world. What the prince saw there is too remarkable to be passed over.

Before the father and son entered the under-world in the necropolis of Memphis, they saw two funerals being carried out there; one was of a rich man, with a large following of mourners richly bedecked, the other was of a poor man being carried to his grave merely wrapped in a mat, and with no follower to mourn him. As they went through the various halls of the under-world, they saw in the fifth the *glorious justified ones.* In the sixth sat Osiris himself, on his golden throne, with Anubis and Thoth standing by his side with his counsellors. Before him stood the balance on which the deeds of mankind are weighed; *he whose evil deeds are more in number than the good, is given to the Devourer of the under-world; his soul and his body are destroyed and he shall live no longer. He whose good deeds are more in number than the evil, he is received among the divine counsellors of the Lord of the under-world, while his soul goes with the glorious justified ones to heaven.* And Khamoës saw also a number of damned; some were standing in the fourth hall, and over them hung bread and water, and they reached out for them, but men dug away the ground under their feet, and they could not reach the food. And in the door of the fifth hall there was a man whose right eye was pierced through by the pin of the door socket, so that he prayed and lamented. And Si-usire said

[1] Griffith, *Stories of the High-priests*, p. 20.
[2] *ib.* p. 42 *et seq.*

to his father that this condemned wretch was the rich man whose grand funeral they had witnessed; his evil deeds had been more numerous than the good; at the throne of Osiris, however, stood a distinguished man, royally clad in finest linen; this was the poor man who had been carried to the grave in a mat; his good deeds had exceeded his evil deeds: therefore the outfit of the rich man had been given to him, and he had been set *among the glorious justified ones as a man of god who accompanies Sokharis*, for *he who is good upon earth, to him good is done in the under-world; but he who is evil to him evil is done.* Si-usire explained yet more to his father, but unfortunately our knowledge is not sufficient to make us certain of the meaning of what

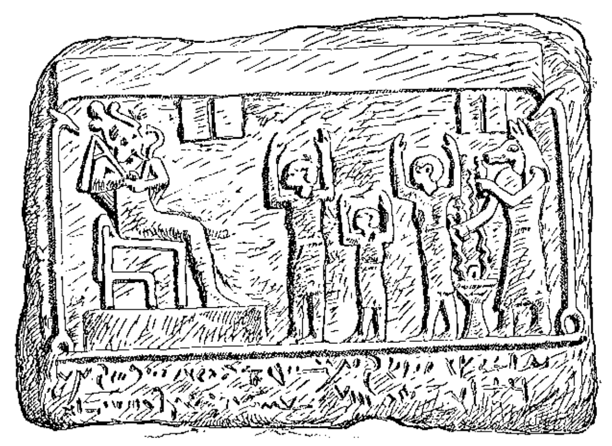


FIG. 119. GRAVESTONE OF THE ROMAN PERIOD; THE DEAD PRAYING BEFORE OSIRIS IN THE GREEK ATTITUDE.
(Berlin, 2132.)

he says. But it is enough to show us that the under-world at this time is very different from the under-world of the earlier periods. Osiris still dwells there with his gods and spirits, but now it is only the deeds of men which can decide their fate; for a sinner, all the coffins and amulets and ushebtis cannot avail. The monster who devours souls still figures in the under-world, and it is still said that it destroys them, but at the same time the imagination of the people has devised punishments for the wicked, which they must undergo, notwithstanding their destruction.

To this change in the kingdom of the Dead, which of itself was only a natural development, was added the transformation caused by the influx of Greek conceptions: Osiris Serapis was transformed into Pluto, Thoth, who weighed the heart, appears as Hermes who carried the souls of men to Hades and carried a key.[1] Others who were changed in this way are incomprehensible to us. Thus Hathor now figures as a goddess of the dead, and a dead woman is no longer called an Osiris, but a Hathor. Bes now protects the dead, and a god who, according to a figure in the Berlin Museum, lets down a chaldron, possibly provides the deceased with the "cool water" which at this time is regarded as the most essential gift of Osiris. Every burial-place shows that during the Roman period the funerary customs were still considered of great importance. It is true that large tombs built in the new Græco-Egyptian compound style have only rarely been found—by far the most important in Alexandria itself—but in the simple pits and shafts of cemeteries we find mummies of great splendour. At no time were they so elaborately wrapped up in bandages, and never had the outer cases been so richly decorated as in the Roman period.



FIG. 120. MUMMY, WITH PAINTED PORTRAIT OF THE DECEASED.[2]

The mask covering the face of the dead was gilded, or else it represented the face of the dead painted in Greek style and with the natural colours. Occasionally the headpiece is worked in the round, and raised a little from the neck, as though the dead were awaking as Osiris once did. Also the features of the deceased are painted on a panel, or on a piece of linen, and laid over the face. At the foot of the coffin there are sandals, on the soles of which are portrayed manacled prisoners, for like Osiris the dead man must tread on his enemies. Or the foot of the coffin is represented as a temple in which the soles of the feet are

[1] Ausfürhl. Verz., p. 356. [2] Petrie, *Hawara*, pl. ix. 4.

depicted as sacred objects. Heaven knows on what idea this is based! Occasionally also the body is represented clothed, the hands and arms richly adorned, or holding a wreath of roses. Figures of the gods are frequently introduced in such mummies, either upon the cover itself, or upon a shroud in which the body is wrapped; they show how Isis suckles the dead, or how Anubis embalms him. However atrociously they are depicted, or however little conception the man who manufactured them had of them, yet doubtless they would secure much happiness for the dead.

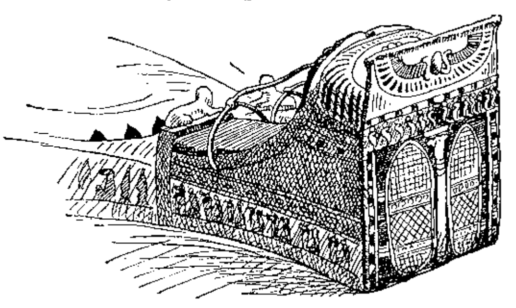


Fig. 121. END OF A MUMMY CASE. Painted to represent a temple. (Berlin, 13463.)

This gorgeous outfit of the Roman mummies is probably connected with another peculiar custom, which may safely be attributed to this period.[1] The mummies of relatives were kept at home for some time, as though the mourners were unwilling to part with them. For this purpose they were placed in coffins provided with a door that opened like that of a cupboard, or they were laid on those magnificent biers with open-work sides which we find in graves of this period.

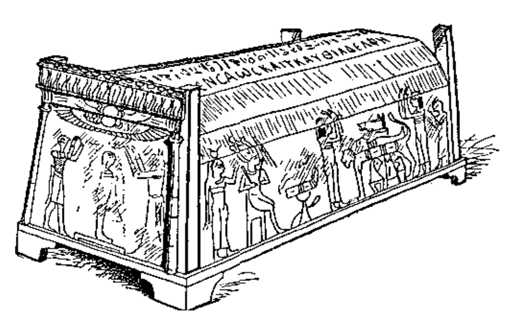


Fig. 122. COFFIN OF THE CHILDREN, SENSAÖS AND TKAUTHI, with a Greek inscription. Second century A.D. (Berlin, 505.)

Naturally burials on this scale were only for the rich, but provision was also made by the government authorities for the poor, that they should have befitting burial. This was not

[1] Carl Schmidt, Ä. Z., xxxii. 56.

a very simple matter, for each one must be laid in the burial-ground of his home. Thus mummies were treated as cargo, and addressed: *To be unladed in the harbour of Emmau,* or simply *in Bompae,* and so given to the master of a ship to be landed at the necropolis of Emmau or Bompae. He would lay him in the sand, where already hundreds of other mummies were deposited, carefully arranged, and hung with small wooden labels. It was a motley company which was thus assembled in one of these massed graves of the Roman period. Near the *priest Sansnos* and *Matrona, wife of the physician Appollonios,* lay the *carpenter, Psenthaësis* and *Epaphrys the slave of the philosopher, Julius Isidorus.*[1] And here again another point strikes us when we read the labels of such a burial-place and observe the variety of the short sentences which here and there accompany the names. Here is the Egyptian formula, *lives thy soul,* and there the Greek, *grieve not, no one is immortal,* or *to everlasting remembrance.* But what does it mean when we find it said of one that he is *gone to rest?* or that he is *gone forth into the brightness?*[2] This question we

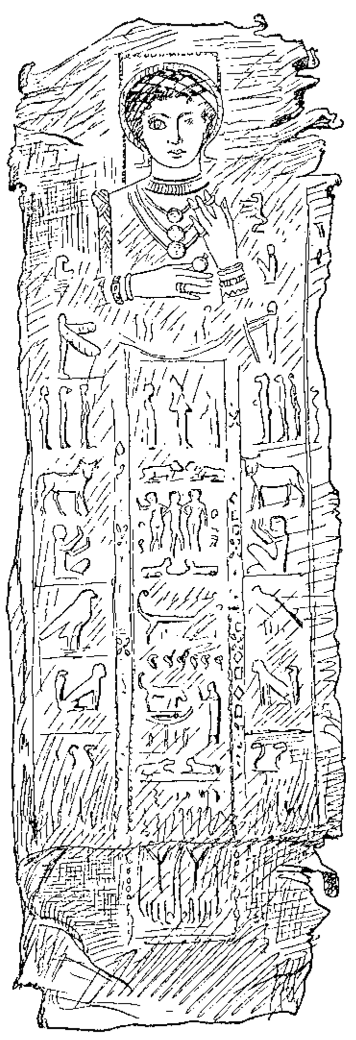


FIG. 123. MUMMY CASE OF THE LATEST PERIOD.
(Berlin, 11659.)

[1] Krebs. Ä. Z., xxxii. 36 *et seq.* [2] Cf. Carl Schmidt, Ä. Z., xxxii. 56.

could not have answered had not the Christian monogram occurred with another name, and if we had not known from other sources that such phrases were used by the Christians of the first century. These people, mummified according to pagan rites, and buried among pagans, were yet Christians! The customs of paganism were still scarcely relinquished by the adherents of the new faith. When a change occurred in this respect we do not know. In any case mummifying continued for a long time in Egypt. Any one who observes the mummy case represented here will be inclined to place it in the fourth century, and therefore in a period when the greater part of the Egyptians were Christians. Yet these gilded designs with which it is adorned show nothing that is Christian, but all manner of paganism, the bark of Osiris, the ship of the sun, and the three graces, and we must therefore consider this to be the mummy of a pagan. It is not improbable, for although from the end of the third century the nation as a whole was Christian, yet paganism lingered even after that time. Among the higher classes and the people of Greek education it might even yet preponderate, and in the fourth and fifth centuries we must not imagine even the people of the lower classes to have been all Christians. As a matter of fact, very little that is distinct has come down to us concerning their faith. In Alexandria the sanctuary of Serapis was the principal temple. In Memphis the god chiefly worshipped was Asklepios, the god who had once been the sage Imhotep (p. 174);[1] but who had now almost taken the place of Ptah at Memphis. At Abydos the little god Bes had almost superseded Osiris, and imparted oracles which were highly prized.[2] In the neighbourhood of Akhmin in Middle Egypt, a god named Petbe was worshipped, whom his Christian opponent compared to Kronos, and to whom he ascribed all the evil that he knew of the Greek god. In this last phase of Egyptian religion, the Greek element appears almost to have had the supremacy, for the same monk of the fifth century in his explanation mentions, in addition to Petbe and Ptah, the goddess Rhea, whose priests castrate themselves; Apollo, the unclean, obscene performer on

[1] Ammonius Marcell., xxxii. 14. 7. [2] *ib.* xviii. 12. 3.

the lyre, Zeus and his son Ares, as though they were the gods ordinarily worshipped by his pagan fellow-countrymen. Other things against which he declaims are entirely Egyptian, such as the custom of lighting a lamp at a *town festival*, or a *house festival*, and that people call out *greeting* to the sun and *victory* to the moon.[1]

It was such preaching as this that brought about the downfall of paganism. Notwithstanding all official prohibition it had actually continued supreme for a length of time, its adherents were peaceable folk, who were quite contented to be left alone to worship their ancient gods. But the fanatical followers of the Christian religion stirred up the populace, and the temple histories of four thousand years came to an end among disorderly tumults. The horrible scenes that brought the ancient religion to a close in Alexandria are well known, the street fights and the storming of the temple of Serapis. But the events in the provinces of which we have any knowledge were of the same character. There Shenute,[2] the holy man famous among the Copts, boasted that he himself had destroyed the temple of Atripe, in the neighbourhood of his cloister, and that this deed had proved an example to other people. In another case the pagans implored his forbearance with regard to their temple. He however drove them out and completely ransacked the temple; it was a rich booty of utensils, statues and books that he brought back to his cloister. When the priests summoned courage, and brought an action against him on account of his pillaging raids, such an overwhelming crowd of Christians assembled in the town on the day of the trial that it was impossible to proceed with the case. In other places also we find the same state of affairs, which is universal wherever a minority is hated by a majority. Of the priests of a certain god Kothos the Christians set abroad a report that they stole their children and slew them, that they sprinkled the altar with their blood, and made of their guts strings for their lutes. The holy Makarios of Tkou thereupon destroyed their temple, and burnt on the same funeral pyre the god Kothos and his high-priest, whose name was Homeros. At that time many of the heathen

[1] Leipoldt, *Schenute*, p. 176. [2] *ib.* p. 178 *et seq.*

allowed themselves to be baptized, but some fled, and the Christians *entered into their houses.*[1] Thus paganism came to a melancholy end; terror for their life and property led the last of its adherents to abandon it; from this time their temples were forsaken and were either transformed into churches or allowed to fall into ruins. Naturally it came about that these ruins were haunted; thus we hear of one temple where there was *an evil demon by name Bes.* Many saw him as he moved about the temple, assuming all manner of forms, and many a time he issued forth and struck at passers by, and then they would become blind or lame or deaf or dumb, but the holy Moses knew how to exorcise him.[2] Thus the gods of the ancient faith had become the ghosts of the new, and the very word *enter*, which once meant a god, in the language of the Christians actually signified an evil spirit. And even now, when they had become abhorred of their own nation, they yet retained a place of refuge in Egypt, albeit a melancholy one—magic. We have seen that the magicians dealt as they chose with the names and legends of the ancient gods, and that later they added to them the arts of the Jews and Greeks. Now that they were Christians, they eagerly employed the names and forms of the new faith, but they did not abandon everything of the old, of which they had so long availed themselves. If a child had stomach-ache, the man who undertook to exorcise it still referred to the child Horus, who had to undergo so many hardships in his forsaken condition. He began his magic with a long story of how the little god caught a bird and devoured it raw, and how he thus got a pain in his stomach. He therefore sent *the third spirit Agrippas, the one eyed and one handed,* to his mother Isis, who was *upon the hill of Heliopolis,* and he told her of her son's misfortune. She said to the spirit: *If thou hadst not found me, and if thou hadst not discovered my name, the true name, that which draws the sun to the west and the moon to the east, and that draws the six stars of atonement that have their place below the sun, then if thou hadst conjured the three thousand vessels that surround the navel, every disease and every ache and every*

[1] *Mémoire de la Mission Archéologique,* iv. 112 *et seq.*
[2] Zoega. Catal. Codd. Copt. p. 533.

pain which is in the body of so and so would immediately have come forth. I who speak am he, the Lord Jesus, who bestows healing. With the last sentence, which does not fit in with what precedes it, the Christian sorcerer made assurance doubly sure. In another spell, intended as a cure for sleeplessness, Isis and Nephthys are alluded to, *these two sisters who are troubled and sad.*[1]

In the eighth century, the people who made use of this magic belonged apparently to the lowest classes. It was part of their art to bewitch dogs and loosen fetters, and if it were possible for any one to feel an interest in such matters as these, it must have been the man who unfortunately found himself with manacled ankles under the care of the police.

Thus it was among quacks and thieves that the ancient gods of Egypt found a final place of refuge; the same gods for whom the temples of Karnak and Memphis had once been built, and who for thousands of years had formed the spiritual influence and guiding genius of a great nation.

[1] Ä. Z., xxxiii. 48 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XI

THE EGYPTIAN RELIGION IN EUROPE

In its decay, the aged tree of the Egyptian Religion put forth a sapling which was destined to overshadow foreign lands to a remarkable degree; throughout the wide Roman empire the worship of Isis and Osiris obtained zealous adherents.

Some knowledge of these gods had long before been introduced by Egyptian sailors and merchants who had settled in the ports and great towns of the Mediterranean. Here they formed Egyptian communities, and their fellow citizens must have felt the contagious attraction of their mysterious festivals. But this would have had no further development had not the attention of the educated classes been arrested. They would in the first place be drawn to the Egyptian beliefs by the vague feeling of veneration which in those countries was accorded to ancient culture and remarkable monuments: in the Roman world there was scarcely any landscape so often represented as that of Egypt with its temples, reed huts and crocodiles. It would, moreover, be supposed that the Egyptians possessed ancient and profound learning; and it was believed that the leaders of the religious world, the Greek philosophers, had acquired the best of their learning from the Egyptian priests. Finally—and for thoughtful minds this was the principal attraction—it was surely among this devout people that the something was to be found, the lack of which was vaguely felt by so many. Religion itself had almost perished among the educated classes, but in many individuals there was a quiet seeking after the supernatural, and anything that could gratify this would be welcome. At the present time we can observe a similar feeling among many of our contemporaries. They have lost the repose

of traditional beliefs, and they are looking for a substitute. The weak-minded fall into Spiritualism, the more powerful cling to Buddhism. Here, again, in both cases the circumstances are similar: the educated classes do not simply accept the foreign religion as it is, for it cannot adapt itself to their critical sense; the "esoteric Buddhism" of the educated woman of the present day is in fact only a garbled philosophy in Buddhist attire, and



FIG. 124. SCENE ON THE NILE, FROM A ROMAN RELIEF IN TERRA COTTA. (Berlin Antiquarium.)

over the Isis belief of Plutarch the priests of Memphis and Thebes would certainly have shaken their heads.

The respect manifested by the educated classes secured greater prominence for the poor priests of Isis of the Greek and Italian cities, and for their marvellous teaching, than was enjoyed by other Eastern priesthoods who also celebrated their rites on Roman soil.

A further attraction was attached to the enjoyment of the

Egyptian faith. For a long time the official religion opposed it, and senate and emperor tried to stamp out this "superstition" by means of prohibitions and restraints. It was unavailing, for if the people could not sacrifice openly to Isis, they did so all the more eagerly in secret, and they certainly had not long to wait before the prohibition was withdrawn. Finally there was no objection made when some one built a temple to Isis and Serapis, and what had been mere tolerance became open recognition. By the end of the first century A.D. no obloquy attached itself to the Egyptian gods, and by the close of another century they were styled *those deities once Egyptian, now also Roman.*[1]

The reign of Hadrian must have contributed much to this development, for he himself had travelled in Egypt, and had an enthusiastic admiration for that country and its gods. His villa on the Tiber contained an Egyptian pleasure-ground which was called Canopus. Statues of the gods in black stone in semi-Egyptian style, and subterranean halls and a sanctuary of Serapis were intended to remind the visitor of the valley of the Nile. During this journey, Antinous, the favourite of the Emperor, was drowned in the Nile, and he considered it the highest possible honour to raise the poor lad to be *throne companion of the gods of Egypt.*[2] In the Greek towns the new demi-god might be represented as a melancholy-looking youth, but in his temple in Egypt he appears as an Egyptian god; and the mausoleum in Rome, which was dedicated to him by the Emperor, was Egyptian and bore hieroglyphic inscriptions. To this day the graceful obelisk of Monte Pincio[3] informs us that *Osiris Antinous, the deceased, who rests in this place, which is situated within the boundaries of fortunate Rome, is recognized as a god in the sacred places of Egypt. Temples are built to him,* and

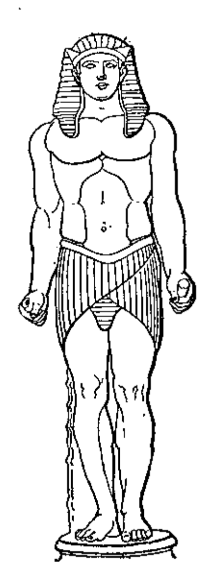


FIG. 125. ANTINOUS. (Statue in Paris.)

[1] Minuc. Felix, 22. 2.
[2] C. I. G., 6007.
[3] Mitt. d. Deutsch. Archäol. Inst. Röm., Abtritt. xi. 113.

he is worshipped by the superior and inferior priests of Upper and Lower Egypt and also by all Egyptians. A city has been called after his name, Greeks and Egyptians come to it, *and lands and fields have been given to them to provide him with a prosperous life there. The temple of this god, which is called Antinous, is therein, and is built of good limestone, with statues of the gods around it and statues and very many columns such as were made earlier by the ancestors and such as were made by the Greeks.* And in this temple *food is laid for him upon his altars,* and he is extolled by the priests and all men make pilgrimage to him *because he hears the requests of those who cry to him and the sick man is healed by means of a dream that he sends to him.* It is the founding of the Græco-Egyptian town of Antinoë which is thus described. This worship of the Greek youth at their festivals struck root, and even in the third century Antinous was still highly revered as one who healed the sick and worked miracles.[1] Thus Europe, for its part, had given a god to Egypt, and who could now call the Egyptian belief a foreign one. And yet even now there were many who could not entirely overcome their horror of the animal-headed gods. This is shown by the jeers of Lucian. There sit the gods in council upon Olympus, but there is uneasiness among them, for the ancient gods of Greece cannot restrain their vexation with the individuals of doubtful standing who have obtruded themselves into their brilliant company, the unmannerly companies of Dionysos, the deities from barbarous countries, and the abstract ideas, such as "virtue" and "fate," invented by the philosophers. At the banquet a noisy crowd is assembled, little in accordance with the tastes of the ancient gods: ambrosia runs short, nectar becomes more and more dear; and Momus, who makes himself spokesman for the discontented party, sets out all this grievance in a long speech, reviling especially the barbarian horde, Attis, Sabazios, Mithras, and all this company who knew no Greek and did not even understand when their healths were drunk. *But* he says *all this may be passed over. But thou, thou dog-headed one, thou Egyptian wrapped in linen, who art thou? and how canst thou, howling dog, wish to be a god? And wherefore doth the*

[1] Origen c. Celsus, III. 36.

motley bull of Memphis allow himself to be worshipped, why doth he speak in oracles, and have priests? Of ibises, monkeys, and kids I prefer not to speak at all, nor yet of the other absurd rubbish which somehow or other has been smuggled out of Egypt into heaven. How can ye, oh gods, permit them to be worshipped equally with yourself, or better if possible? And thou, Zeus, how canst thou endure having ram's horns affixed by them? Zeus admits that these Egyptian creatures are detestable, but he adds cautiously: Many of *these are enigmas, and he who is not initiated in them shall not laugh at them.*[1]

The reply of Zeus to Momus is evidently the answer given to scoffers by the educated adherents of Isis: You see only the external, strange features of our belief, and cannot guess what lies hidden behind them. Plutarch also says that he who takes these matters literally, and does not attempt to understand their higher meaning, *must spit and purify his mouth.* Then who is Osiris? Osiris is the principle of moisture and the fructifying power of generation. He is the reasoning power of the soul and law and order in the world. Yea, he is Good itself. But Typhon is aridity, drought, sterility; he is the lack of sense, the indiscretion of the soul, and disease and disorder in the world: he is Evil. Isis has the fruitful earth as her body, she is the feminine, the receptive half of generation in nature; the elements for good and evil, which, in accordance with their nature, however, incline to good.[2] All goodness and order are the work of Isis and a figure of Osiris.[3] Nothing, however, is so pleasing to this goddess as inquiry into truth and right knowledge of the divine; she assists divine learning while Typhon wars against it. He who lives a disciplined, temperate, and chaste life devoted to the service of her temple, can attain to the knowledge of the first and highest spiritual ideas, and to this she invites us by means of her shrine.[4] It is not the linen garment and shaven head that make the Isis worshipper, although these contain profound meanings; but the true Isis worshipper is he who ponders over sacred matters, and seeks therein for hidden truths.[5] For in these matters there is nothing which is

[1] Lucian, *Decorum Concilium*, 10.
[2] Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 33, 38, 39, 49, 53. [3] *ib.* 64. [4] *ib.* 2. [5] *ib.* 3.

not of importance. Because the sistrum which is shaken before the goddess (p. 40) is rounded at the top and has four transverse bars, it is to the wise a symbol of the orbit of the moon, which embraces everything, and of the four elements which are contained within it. Also because the sistrum is frequently decorated at the top with a cat, the profane imagine it is on account of the cat-headed, joyous Bast (p. 13). Plutarch, however, knows the true reason: the cat also has a significance connected with the moon, because it is a fickle, nocturnal, prolific animal, or because it widens its eyes at the full moon. Also the two female heads on the handle are Isis and Nephthys, and signify here birth and death. Thus when the sistrum is shaken it is a sign that all beings must move in a settled order.[1]

If the belief in Isis had consisted only of such hair-splitting ideas, it would never have attained to any degree of power, but it was only a small minority who considered it necessary to attempt to combine their religious feelings and their philosophical views. The ideas of simple-minded worshippers of Isis are shown in two inscriptions from the Greek islands. Both express the same ideas, but one copiously sets forth in Homeric verse what the other expresses in prose: *I am Isis, mistress of the whole land: I was instructed by Hermes, and with Hermes I invented the writings of the nations, in order that not all should write with the same letters. I gave mankind their laws, and ordained what no one can alter. I am the eldest daughter of Kronos. I am the wife and sister of the king Osiris. I am she who rises in the dog star. I am she who is called the goddess of women. The town of Bubastis was built in my honour. I am she who separated the heaven from the earth. I have pointed out their paths to the stars. I have invented seamanship. . . . I have brought together men and women. . . . I have ordained that the elders shall be beloved by the children. With my brother Osiris I made an end of cannibalism. I have instructed mankind in the mysteries.* I have taught *reverence of the divine statues. I have established the temple precincts. I have overthrown the dominion of the tyrants. I have caused men to love women.*

[1] Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 63.

I have made justice more powerful than silver and gold. I have caused truth to be considered beautiful.[1] . . . An inscription which is said to have been placed over a grave of Isis at Nysa in Arabia must probably have been similar, and one on a grave of Osiris at the same place is said to have run thus: *My father is Kronos, the youngest of all the gods, and I am the King Osiris, who has conducted war over the whole world, even to the uninhabited parts of India and to the regions of the North, even to the sources of the Danube, and again even to the ocean. I am the eldest son of Kronos, and as a germ out of a beautiful noble egg . . . was I born. There is no part of the world where I have not been, and I gave all that I discovered.*[2]

All the ideas that centred round these gods were collected in a short hymn, which has been preserved on an inscription at Cius, in Bithynia.[3]

Thee, king of all the heavens, I greet thee, eternal Anubis
With Osiris thy father, sacred one crowned with gold,
He is Zeus, son of Kronos, he is the mighty Amon,
The immortal king, highly revered as Serapis.
Thee also, blessed goddess and mother, Isis of the many names,
To whom the heavens gave birth on the glittering waves of the sea,
And whom the darkness begat as the light for all mankind,
Who as the eldest dost wield the sceptre in Olympus,
And as mistress and goddess dost rule over earth, and the sea,
Of which thou seest the whole . . . much good has thou given mankind.

It will be seen how greatly simplified is the Egyptian religion here: of all the deities besides Isis, there are actually only two remaining: Osiris Serapis, who is at the same time Amon, and Horus, who is also Anubis. Isis is the regulator of nature, and it has become she who has associated man with man. Osiris has fallen into the background. Notwithstanding his triumphs, in which his European friends acquiesced, he is in reality no more than the deceased husband whom Isis laments. In addition to this, the human side of his character, which this god possessed in earlier days, has once more gained the ascendency to such a degree that non-believers make objection to *the man Osiris*.[4]

[1] C. I. G., xii. 5. I. p. 217.
[2] Diodorus, I. 27.
[3] C. I. G., 3724.
[4] Lucian, *Pharsal*, viii. 832.

To the adoration accorded to Isis for her benevolence to mankind was now added the gratitude that was her due from individuals. As goddess of the port of Alexandria, she aided in the first place the seafarers, and he who returned safely in spite of storms would cause a votive picture to be painted for her temple, and thus Isis *provides for the painters.*[1] When her lover is about to sail, the maiden worships Isis with redoubled fervour, she shakes the sistrum before her, she purifies herself, and sleeps alone; if he returns home in safety, she will go apparelled in linen and with loosened hair to sit among the crowd in front of the temple, and sing the praise of the goddess twice daily.[2]

But Isis also punishes sinners; the embezzler fears lest she should strike him over the eyes with the *angry sistrum* and blind him.[3] Or the lady who *on the holy days which must be observed,* has not practised continence, feels uneasy, for in the temple it appeared to her *as though the silver serpent moved his head;* it is true that the priest reassures her, for it is to be hoped that Osiris will pardon her if she presents him with a goose and a cake.[4] But it was not always that the gods could be so easily appeased, and votive inscriptions tell of real gifts of the precious metals, of jewelled serpents, silver sistrums and dishes; a Spanish lady consecrates to Isis a snake with many precious stones, and besides other jewellery, more than seventy pounds of silver vessels.[5]

It was naturally still more pleasing to the goddess to have her temple rebuilt by some devout worshipper. Thus at Malcesina, on the Lake of Garda, one G. Menatius *restored her temple and built a porch to it at his own charges.*[6] At Benevento one Lucilius *built a magnificent palace for the great Isis, the mistress of Benevento, and to her companion gods,* and erected to her *two obelisks of red granite,* which are still in existence, with hieroglyphic inscriptions, from which we gain this information. For this the gods give him *a long life of gladness,* and as he also timed his dedication of the temple in order to combine with it the celebration of *the happy return home* of Domitian, who

[1] Juvenal, 12. 28. [2] Tibull. 1, 3, 23. [3] Juvenal, 13. 92.
[4] *ib* 6. 526 *et seq* [5] C. I. L., II. 3386. [6] C. I. L. V., I. 4007.

returned from the country and from the conquered foreign lands to his capital, Rome, the conqueror of countries, no doubt he was well rewarded by the Emperor for his building,[1] so much the more that Domitian himself was a patron of Isis and of Serapis, to whom he had recently built a temple in Rome. In Pompeii,[2] where the temple of Isis had been destroyed by an earthquake in the year 63 A.D., the family of the Popidii rebuilt it, and actually did so in the name of a six-year-old boy, N. Popidius Celsinus. Here the pious act was not free from worldly considerations, for the temple community were compelled by gratitude to receive the youthful founder among their number.

Such a temple of Isis had little in common with those of

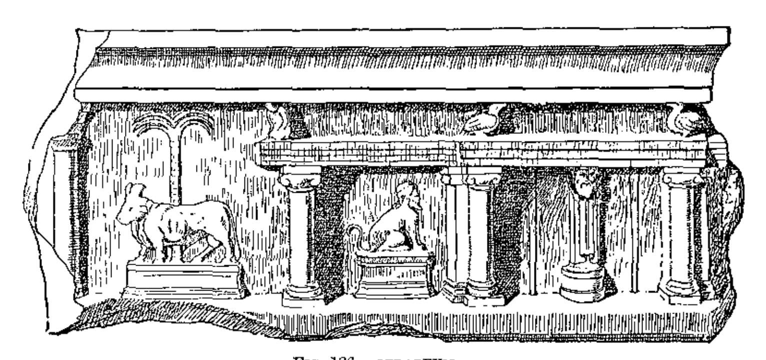


FIG. 126. SERAPEUM.
In the centre is seen the figure of the god ; to the left, in the court, a statue of an Apis. (Berlin, 16777.)

Egpyt, as is shown by this temple at Pompeii; it is possible that it was modelled on that of Alexandria. In a court, surrounded by a colonnade, stood the actual temple, to which a flight of steps led. It consisted of a porch, supported on six columns, and of a chamber which was the holy of holies. A smaller building stood in one corner of the courtyard, and near this was a large altar. On two sides the court was surrounded by chambers which served as dwelling-places for the priests, for storehouses, and similar uses. The decoration of this temple and its surrounding buildings was a mixture of Egyptian and

[1] Ä. Z., 34. 149 *et seq.*

[2] For the following cf. Lafaye, *Histoire du culte des dieux d'Alexandrie*, p. 173 *et seq.*

Greek, sacred and profane. By the side of Isis, Osiris, Harpokrates, Anubis, the sacred animals and the priests, there were to be seen Dionysos and Narcissus, Chiron with Achilles, and representations of the delightful stories of Ares and Aphrodite. Two pictures which represent the history of Io effect a compromise; this unfortunate favourite of Zeus, who fled to Egypt in the form of a cow, had long been recognized as the cow-goddess of Egypt, and had by a strange development been credited with giving birth to the Apis bull. The landscapes show Egyptian scenes with shrines and sphinxes or sea pieces with ships, of which Isis was the patroness. Among the marble statues of the temple, besides Isis we find Dionysos, Aphrodite, and Priapus. Five other statues have only the faces, hands, and feet of stone, the bodies being made of wood; obviously these were the statues which were arrayed in linen and carried in procession at the feasts. The largest of these wore gold earrings and carried a sistrum.

While the buildings of the temple and the paintings on it were thus half or entirely Greek, great importance, on the other hand, was laid on the importation of works of actual Egyptian art. Therefore in Benevento, Pompeii, Rome, and, in fact, wherever a temple of Isis was built, ancient tables of offerings, sphinxes, statues, and other sculptures were by some means procured from the inexhaustible stores of the Egyptian temples and tombs, and set up for the gratification of Isis. It was of no consequence that the old inscriptions on these monuments bore no reference to their new surroundings, for none of the people were able to read these hieroglyphs. Thus monuments of all periods of Egyptian history were brought across the sea; the Egyptian priests converted what they considered the superfluous possessions of their gods into money, and thus proved themselves to possess as few scruples as the Italian priests of the eighteenth century, who sold the altars of their churches to foreign countries. From this traffic we can now discern what style of sculpture was most valued. If possible, the pieces must be of black or dark stone, colouring which, while it differed from that of their own statuary, appeared best to express the mysterious ideas that were ascribed to the Egyptian religion.

The daily rites consisted principally of simple offerings and incense burning. According to ancient custom it fell to the women who were in attendance on Isis to play the sistrum before the goddess, and sprinkling with water must also have been part of their duties, for they are represented with sistrum and water jug.

Two of the great festivals connected with the worship of Isis enjoyed special fame. One was the three days' feast in November, when a performance was given representing the death of Osiris, the search for his body, and its discovery. What an impression was made on distant countries by these feasts is shown by the allusion to them in literature. Thus Ovid speaks of *Osiris who is never sufficiently sought for.*[1] Juvenal mentions the shout of the people *when Osiris is found,*[2] and Lucan introduces us to the *dogs who are demi-gods and the grief-compelling sistrums.*[3] Also from them arose the remarkable idea that the Egyptian gods found their pleasures in songs of lamentation and not in joyous dances as did the Greek deities.[4] It is clear that these festivals were performed in the sight of all, although their more secret ceremonies may have been confined to the restricted circle of the "Isiaci," those true believers who formed a religious brotherhood, and had their "school" close to the temple.



FIG. 127. AMARYLLIS, PRIESTESS OF ISIS, with sistrum and lustral jar. From a gravestone at Athens.

Of the great feast that occurred in March, when Isis inaugurated navigation for the year, we have a clear account dating from the second century. It describes the festival as it was held at Kenchrea, the eastern port of Korinth.[5] The feast was opened by a group of mummers, soldiers and huntsmen, gladiators and philosophers, an ass as Pegasus, a she-bear as a lady, and a monkey as Ganymede. When the crowd had been

[1] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IX. 693.
[2] Juvenal, VIII. 29.
[3] Lucan, *Pharsal.*, VIII. 832.
[4] Apuleius, *de deo Socratis*, XIV.
[5] Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI. 8–17.

entertained with these burlesque performances they next beheld a procession of women, wearing white garments and crowned with spring flowers; these strewed flowers on the road and besprinkled it with sweet scents, or they carried combs and mirrors, and made as though they were dressing the hair of the goddess. Men and women followed with lamps and torches, and these again

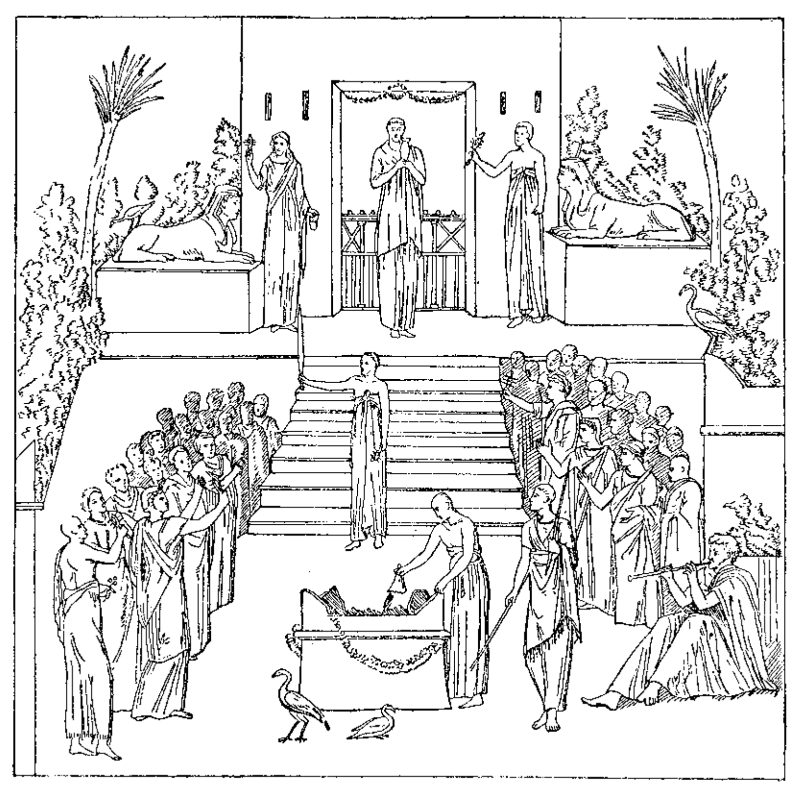


FIG. 128. TEMPLE FESTIVAL.
Wall painting from the Isis temple at Pompeii.

were followed by the musicians with syrinxes and flutes and a choir of youthful choristers in white garments, singing a song specially composed for the feast. This modern music was followed by the ancient sacred music: first came the flautists of Serapis, who played an air only used in the temple on a flute of

special form; then came the votaries who performed on the sistrum, men and women of every age, the men shaven, the women with a white cloth round the hair. After six officials carrying a lamp, an altar, and other sacred objects, there followed the gods themselves. As was befitting, the dog-headed Anubis came first, black with a golden head, and with caduceus and palms as his symbols. An attendant who followed with *blissful steps* bore a standing cow, the statue of the all-productive fruitful goddess. The casket, borne by a second attendant, contained *the mysteries of the glorious religion*, and the third held *to his fortunate bosom the revered image of the supreme deity:* it is the model of a very sacred relic, a small gold vase, decorated with wonderful Egyptian figures. Behind, at the rear of the whole procession, came the priest with a sistrum and a wreath of roses in his hand.

Thus they make their way to the sea, where a beautiful ship, adorned with Egyptian figures, awaits them. The high-priest *with chaste mouth utters a pious prayer*, purifies the ship, and dedicates it to the goddess. Its mast is trimmed and the sail, and all the people sprinkle it with sweet scents. The cables which hold it are then cut, and as it sails away the people gaze after it till it has disappeared. The procession then returns to the temple, and the priests and votaries enter the chamber of the goddess, while the crowd waits in expectation. After a time the scribe of the temple comes out and proclaims the health of the emperor, the senate, the Roman nation, ships and seamen. The crowds shout as these are proclaimed, the people decorate themselves with flowers, they kiss the feet of one of the statues of the goddess and then disperse.

If this description sounds somewhat extravagant there is sufficient reason for it; Lucius, the man who describes it in a romance, was one of the fortunate people who was especially intimate with the goddess; he had been accepted into the innermost circle of the faithful. Isis, to whom he owed gratitude for deliverance from a long period of distress, had previously admonished him in a dream to become one of her followers, but Mithras, the aged high-priest of Kenchrea, would not agree to receive him, as he himself had received no command from the goddess. When this

at length occurred he received the lucky novice the following day into the temple. There he took from the holy of holies several books which were inscribed with *animals* and wonderful scrolls: from these he learned all that was necessary for consecration. When Lucius had purchased all that was necessary he was led in the company of the religious to the bath, and purified by means of *lustrations.* In the afternoon, at the feet of the goddess, he was instructed in the mysteries, and he was enjoined to abstain for ten days from animal food and from wine. When this time had elapsed the faithful assembled towards evening; he put on a thin linen garment and was taken by the priests into the holy of holies. What took place there he can only indicate to us: he went into the realms of the dead and returned through all the elements. In the middle of the night he had seen the sun shining, and he had gazed upon the greater and lesser gods and had prayed to them. When he came out in the morning he had to stand on a pedestal placed in the middle of the temple before the statue of Isis; he was clothed in bright-coloured garments decorated with figures of animals, in his hand he held a torch, a garland of palm leaves adorned his head, and surrounded it like rays of light. Then the hangings were drawn back, and the people saw him, as he stood there, *adorned like the sun.*



FIG. 129. ISIS STATUE FOUND AT COLOGNE.

Later Lucius received a second consecration in Rome, which also was arranged by means of dreams. After a ten days' fast he was admitted by the priest Asinius Marcellus in the Isis temple of the Campus Martius *into the holy supreme things of the great god and father of the gods, the invincible Osiris.* And again a third time he received an injunction from the gods, who graciously

proposed to give him a third consecration, whereas other people barely received the first. Most willingly did he extend the preliminary fast greatly beyond the requisite time, and also no expenditure was too great for him. Osiris then appeared to him in his actual form, and received him into the college of the pastophori, "the bearers of the divine statue," and also into their council. This was an ancient college, founded in the time of Sulla, and Lucius was fortunate in belonging to it. Henceforth, wherever he went, he prided himself on his shorn head, which he wore without concealment, as a sign that he was a priest of the Egyptian gods.[1]

It can only have been very rarely that Isis was worshipped with such intense enthusiasm as by this devotee, but while others worshipped her with merely superficial devotion they added at any rate to the number of her adherents. There can have been no province in the wide Roman empire where the Egyptian gods were not worshipped, and Tertullian could assert *the whole world now swears by Serapis.*[2] We meet with them in every part of Asia Minor. In sacred Delos, which was devoted to the service of other gods, there were yet some who worshipped Isis-Astarte-Aphrodite and Eros-Harpokrates-Apollo.[3] In Athens we find gravestones of female worshippers of Isis. In Northern Africa, in Spain, in the land of the Danube, in France, and even in England we meet with inscriptions relating to Isis and Serapis. Among the Alps and in Germany they obtained foothold in various places. The Nonsberg, close to Bötzen, as we learn in terms of reproach from a Christian source,[4] was *full of the madness of Isis and the extravagance of Serapis.* At Prelst, in the Corinthian Glantal, there was a shrine of the Norican Isis.[5] At Marienhausen, in the Rhine Province, there stood an altar of Serapis, erected by a Roman officer,[6] while small bronze images of Egyptian gods are repeatedly found on the banks of the Rhine. The most remarkable example, however, has been pre-

[1] Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI. 19 *et seq.*
[2] Tertullian, *Ad Nat.*, 2, 8.
[3] *Bulletin de correspondence Hellénique*, VI. 1882, p. 473.
[4] Acta SS., XX. Mai, p. 44.
[5] C. I. L., III. 4806 *et seq.*
[6] Brambach, C. I. Rhen., 1541.

served to us by the Church of St. Ursula at Cologne, and is a *small statue of the unconquered* Isis, *which was adapted in the* middle ages for one of the capitals of the pillars.[1] And when we find not far from this church the grave of an Egyptian, Horus, the son of Pabek, we naturally wonder whether this man, who had wandered from the Nile to the Rhine, may not have been a priest of the great goddess.

Thus Isis worship flourished in Europe so long as the worship of other pagan deities continued. And also in the last attempt to revive expiring paganism Isis worship played its part. Julian acknowledged the Egyptian gods, and when, in the year 392 A.D., Arbogast the Frank placed Eugenius on the throne, and thus secured a short triumph for the pagan aristocracy, Isis was not forgotten. In the year 394 Nicomachus Flavianus, as consul, celebrated the last official festival in Rome of the Magna Mater, and of Isis. In the same year, however, Theodosius triumphed and all was over.

Even then a quiet company of adherents to the Egyptian belief existed in the Roman world. This was the circle of the mystic philosophers, who, even as late as the sixth century, taught in the chief places of culture. They delighted in everything that was mystic, ecstatic and marvellous, and how could they fail to be in raptures with Egypt? For was not Egypt a *godly* land, where the altars were supplied with all things, where there were innumerable priests, who observed all the ceremonies, and where the altars burnt continually? The Egyptians had taught the worship of the gods to almost all the world, *and we know,* says the naïve author of the fourth century, who supplies us with this information, that *there the gods have dwelt and still dwell.*[2] Thus this sacred land formed the ideal of these mystics. One of them, Asklepiades, who lived in the fifth century, stayed for a long time in Egypt, in order to study this



FIG. 130. COINS OF JULIAN WITH APIS AND ANUBIS.

[1] Bonn, *Jahrb.* lxxvi. 38.

[2] *Descr. totius mundi* (ed. Lumbroso, Accad. dei Lincei, 1898), p. 144 *et seq.*

sacred knowledge at the fountain-head. He composed hymns to the Egyptian gods, and wrote a work on the Egyptian religion. But however studiously he might carry on investigations, there was one thing to which he could not attain, which his more fortunate friend Heraiskus possessed by nature. It is true that Heraiskus did not know so much of *the Egyptian wisdom*, but *his essence was more divine.* It was given to him to feel, when he saw a statue of a god, *whether or not it lives.* If the statue was animated by the god (p. 43) then *his heart was roused by the* sight, *and body and soul were seized with ecstasy as though he were inspired by the god.* And when he died and was being buried his body suddenly shone through the linen wrappings, as a sign that he was united with the gods. Like an ancient Egyptian of former days he was *illuminated* (pp. 89, 91).[1]

But even the mystics could not deceive themselves into thinking that any power in the world could re-establish the supremacy of these gods. They knew that they were the last of the pagans, and also that sacred Egypt itself, *the copy of the heavens . . . the temple of the assembled universe,* henceforth belonged to the Christians. It is not without sympathy that we read the mournful prophecy which echoes down to us from among their company. *A time will come when it will appear as though it were for naught that the Egyptians piously and sedulously worshipped the godhead . . . for the godhead will return from earth to heaven, and Egypt will be left desolate, and the land which was the abode of religion will no longer shelter the gods. . . . Oh Egypt, Egypt, of thy religion only fables will survive, which will appear incredible to later races, and words only will remain upon the stones which record thy pious deeds.*[2]

[1] Suidas, *s. v.* Heraiskus.

[2] Pseudo Apuleius, *Asclepius*, xxiii.

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